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ABSTRACT

This report describes the results of an assessment of social studies for grades 4, 8, and 10 of English language schools in Manitoba. Students in each grade were given a written test, the results of which are reported here. The results of a survey of teachers of each grade also are reported. Additionally, interviews with grade four teachers and an observational study of grade four students were conducted. A number of recommendations are made based on each part of the assessment. Tables of data and graphs appear throughout the report. A bibliography and the following five appendices also are included: (1) Teacher surveys--grades 4, 8 and 10; (2) Protocols for observational study; (3) Student group reactions from the observational study; (4) Student comments relating to quality of life judgments; and (5) Student comments relating to interaction with a child from a world community. The summary report is attached. (DB)

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# MANITOBA SOCIAL STUDIES ASSESSMENT 1989

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## Final Report

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# MANITOBA SOCIAL STUDIES ASSESSMENT 1989

## FINAL REPORT

A REPORT OF THE

CURRICULUM SERVICES BRANCH

MANITOBA EDUCATION AND TRAINING

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Winnipeg, Manitoba October, 1991

# PREFACE

This *Final Report* is the second of three reports of the findings of the 1989 Social Studies Assessment for grades 4, 8, and 10 of English language schools. It contains a description of the study along with conclusions and recommendations based on teacher opinions and the judgement of the Technical Advisory Committee. Members of the Committee reviewed the data and interpreted it in the light of their considerable knowledge and experience.

There are two other series of reports in this assessment. They are the *Preliminary Report* which presents the actual data and the *Summary Report* which presents an overview of the results along with the main conclusions and recommendations.

The *Preliminary Report* was distributed to all schools in the province as well as to school division offices, to teacher and trustee associations, to libraries, and to the universities. The *Summary Report* will receive the same distribution as the *Preliminary Report*, while the more extensive *Final Report* will only be distributed to school division offices, teacher and trustee organizations, libraries, and universities. Additional copies of this *Final Report*, however, can be obtained from Manitoba Education and Training on request.

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7

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- The Social Studies Technical Advisory Committee which advised on test production and analysis of results.
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

PREFACE . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . iii

COMMITTEES AND GROUPS ASSOCIATED WITH THE ASSESSMENT . . . iv

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . vi

LIST OF GRAPHS . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . viii

LIST OF TABLES . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . ix

CHAPTER 1 - Background . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 1

CHAPTER 2 - Methodology . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 5

CHAPTER 3 - Grade Four Written Test . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 9

CHAPTER 4 - Grade Four Teacher Survey . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 51

CHAPTER 5 - Grade Four Teacher Interviews . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 83

CHAPTER 6 - Grade Four Student Observational Study . . . . . . . . . 97

CHAPTER 7 - Grade Eight Written Test . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 147

CHAPTER 8 - Grade Eight Teacher Survey . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 185

CHAPTER 9 - Grade Ten Written Test . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 199

CHAPTER 10 - Grade Ten Teacher Survey . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 237

CHAPTER 11 - Comparison of 1984 and 1989 Results . . . . . . . . . 253

CHAPTER 12 - Assessment Summary Comments . . . . . . . . . . . . 261

BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 265

## APPENDICES

APPENDIX A - Teacher Surveys - Grades 4, 8 and 10 . . . . . . . . . . 267

APPENDIX B - Protocols for Observational Study . . . . . . . . . . . 277

APPENDIX C - Student Group Recreations from the Observational Study . . 293

APPENDIX D - Student Comments Relating to Quality of Life Judgements . 297

APPENDIX E - Student Comments Relating to Interaction with a Child from a World Community . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 299

# LIST OF GRAPHS

Page

3.1 Attitudes of Grade 4 Students Toward Cooperation and Conflict . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 38

3.2 Attitudes of Grade 4 Students Toward Interdependence . . . . . . . . . 39

3.3 Attitudes of Grade 4 Students Related to Altruism . . . . . . . . . . . . . 40

3.4 Attitudes of Grade 4 Students Related to National Chauvinism . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 41

3.5 Attitudes of Grade 4 Students Related to Ethnocentrism . . . . . . . . . 42

3.6 Attitudes of Grade 4 Students Toward Solving World Problems . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 43

3.7 Attitudes of Grade 4 Students Toward Studying World Communities . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 44

4.1 Graph of Grade 4 Teachers Who Have Taken Social Science Courses . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 52

4.2 World Issues Taught Within the Context of the Grade Four Program . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 62

4.3 Importance of Dealing with Bias & Stereotyping in Teaching Grade 4 Program . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 65

4.4 Importance of Developing Students' Sense of Empathy and Responsibility . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 67

4.5 Percent of Grade 4 Teachers Who Have Taken Social Studies Inservices . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 76

8.1 Graph of Grade 8 Teachers Who Have Taken Social Sciences Courses . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 185

10.1 Graph of Grade 10 Teachers Who Have Taken Social Science Courses . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 237

# LIST OF TABLES

Page

2.1 Student Testing - Grades 4, 8, and 10 Sampling Statistics ........ 5

2.2 Comparison Testing 1984 & 1989 Sampling Statistics ........... 6

2.3 Teacher Surveys 1989 Population and Sampling Statistics ........ 7

2.4 Student Observational Study and Teacher Interviews Population and Sampling Statistics - Grade 4 ................. 7

3.1 Frequency Response Rate (in Percentages) of Students Providing Basic Information About a Community by Coding Category ....... 16

3.2 Knowledge of Canada Demonstrated by Grade 4 Students in 1989 and Grade 3 Students in 1984 .............. 17

3.3 Correct Student Response Rates to Knowledge of the Globe, World Maps, and Landforms ........................... 18

3.4 Mean Correct Response Rate on Mapping Skills Subtest of Grade 4 Students ..................................... 19

3.5 Mean Correct Response Rates of Grade 4 Students on the Information Locating Skills Subtest ........................ 23

3.6 Mean Correct Response Rates of Grade 4 Students on Information Gathering Skills Subtest ...................... 24

3.7 Mean Correct Response Rates of Grade 4 Students on Identifying the Main Idea Subtest ........................ 25

3.8 Frequency Response of Grade 4 Students in Providing Reasons/ Evidence for Conclusions and Opinions on Selected Items ........ 26

3.9 Frequency Response of Student Perception of the Relative Importance of Selected Factors in the Quality of Community Life ........... 29

3.10 Frequency Response of Students to Quality-of-Life Statements on a 3-point Scale ......................... 32

3.11 Frequency Response of Grade 4 Students on Items Relating to the Similarity of Human Needs ................. 35

3.12 Student Judgements of the Similarity/Dissimilarity of Human Needs as Related to Cultural Distinctiveness ................. 36

4.1 Global Distribution of Communities/Countries Studied in Grade 4 Social Studies ........................ 58

Page

4.2 Reasons for Selecting Communities/Countries for Study . . . . . . . . . 60

4.3 Current Events Identified by Teachers for Use with the Grade 4 Social Studies Program . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 63

4.4 Teachers' Preferred Sequencing for Teaching Map and Research Skills 64

4.5 Teachers' Approaches for Dealing with Bias and Stereotyping . . . . . 66

4.6 Teachers' Approaches to Encouraging Empathy and Responsibility . . 68

4.7 Teacher Evaluation Needs . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 75

4.8 Social Studies Inservice Needs Identified by Grade 4 Teachers . . . . . 77

5.1 Teacher Emphasis on Curriculum Objectives During Evaluation for Instruction and Grading . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 93

5.2 Suggested Topics for Inservice in Grade 4 Social Studies . . . . . . . . . 94

6.1 Student Definitions of Community by Response Category . . . . . . . . 100

6.2 Frequency Distribution of Features Placed in Model Communities . . 102

6.3 Frequency Distribution of Community Features by Category . . . . . . 103

6.4 Frequency of Reasons Cited for Placement of Features on Model Communities . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 104

6.5 Student Perception of Environmental Effects of the Creation of a New Community . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 107

6.6 Student-generated Responses for Most Liked and Least-Liked Features of their Communities . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 107

6.7 Student Views About the Future of Their Communities . . . . . . . . . . 108

6.8 Knowledge of Globe Use by Grade 4 Students . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 109

6.9 Global Distribution of Countries/Communities that Students Recalled Studying and Selected for Further Questions . . . . . . . . . . . 112

6.10 Summarized Responses for Locational Questions . . . . . . . . . . . . . 114

6.11 Ideas and Information Provided by Students about Communities According to Category . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 115

Page

6.12 Ratings for Group Planning and Cooperation during World Community Building Activity . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 117

6.13 Items Included in World Community Drawings . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 120

6.14 Completeness and Coherence Ratings for Group Recreations of Communities . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 122

6.15 Probing Questions and Areas of Need Identified by Groups . . . . . . . 127

6.16 Type of Problems Identified by Students . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 129

6.17 Explanations about How People Deal with Problems . . . . . . . . . . . 130

6.18 Students' Examples of Differences and Similarities Between Life in a World Community and Life in Their Own Community . . . . 132

6.19 Students' Reasons for the Existence of Differences Between the Way of Life in Their Own Communities and in a World Community . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 136

6.20 Students' Reasons for the Existence of Similarities Between the Way of Life in Their Own Communities and in a World Community . 136

6.21 Response Rate and Frequency Distribution of Quality-of-Life Judgements of Grade 4 Students . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 138

6.22 Response Rate and Frequency Distribution of Reasons for Quality-of-Life Judgements of Grade 4 Students . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 139

6.23 Response Rates and Frequency Distribution of Grade 4 Students' Interaction with Children from Their Selected World Community . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 141

6.24 Response Rates and Frequency Distribution of Reasons Given by Grade 4 Students for Interaction with Children from Their Selected World Communities . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 143

7.1 Subtest of Each Test Item . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 148

7.2 Percentage of Correct Responses to Items on Knowledge of Facts and Generalizations Subtest . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 149

7.3 Response Rates per Item by Range of Correct Responses on Knowledge of Facts and Generalizations Subtest . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 149

Page

7.4 Percentage of Correct Responses to Items on the First Four Categories of Thinking and Research Skills . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 160

7.5 Overall SOLO Level . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 170

7.6 Sentence Structure and Usage . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 171

7.7 Mechanics (Punctuation, Capitalization, Spelling) . . . . . . . . . . . . . 171

9.1 Grade 10 Geography Assessment 1989 Categorization of Items by Subtest . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 200

9.2 Response Rate by Content Area on Knowledge of Facts and Generalizations Subtest . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 201

9.3 Response Rates per Item by Range of Correct Response on Knowledge of Facts and Generalizations Subtest . . . . . . . . . . . . 201

9.4 Percentage of Correct Responses to Map Location Items . . . . . . . . . 214

9.5 Overall SOLO Level . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 220

9.6 Sentence Structure and Usage . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 222

9.7 Mechanics (Punctuation, Capitalization, Spelling) . . . . . . . . . . . . . 222

9.8 Comparison of Students' Social Participation Activities: 1984 and 1989 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 229

9.9 Percentage of Correct Responses to Items on Thinking and Research Skills . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 231

10.1 Allocation of Time to Unit 1 on Semestered and Non-semestered Basis 243

10.2 Allocation of Time to Unit 2 on Semestered and Non-semestered Basis 243

10.3 Allocation of Time to Unit 3 on Semestered and Non-semestered Basis 243

10.4 Allocation of Time to Unit 4 on Semestered and Non-semestered Basis 244

10.5 Allocation of Time to Unit 5 on Semestered and Non-semestered Basis 244

10.6 Allocation of Time to Unit 6 on Semestered and Non-semestered Basis 244

10.7 Allocation of Time to Unit 8 on Semestered and Non-semestered Basis 244

11.1 Knowledge Subtest Comparison of Means 1984 and 1989 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 253

11.2 Thinking and Research Skills Subtest Comparison of Means 1984 and 1989 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 253

Page

11.3 Comparison of Grade 3 Students' Knowledge Performance: 1984 and 1989 . . . . . . . . . . 254

11.4 Comparison of Grade 3 Students' Thinking and Research Skills Performance: 1984 and 1989 . . . . . . . . . . 254

11.5 Comparison of Grade 6 Students' Knowledge Performance: 1984 and 1989 . . . . . . . . . . 255

11.6 Comparison of Grade 6 Students' Thinking and Research Skills Performance: 1984 and 1989 . . . . . . . . . . 255

11.7 Comparison of Grade 9 Students' Knowledge Performance: 1984 and 1989 . . . . . . . . . . 256

11.8 Comparison of Grade 9 Students' Thinking and Research Skills Performance: 1984 and 1989 . . . . . . . . . . 257

11.9 Comparison of Grade 12 Students' Knowledge Performance: 1984 and 1989 . . . . . . . . . . 258

11.10 Comparison of Grade 12 Students' Thinking and Research Skills Performance: 1984 and 1989 . . . . . . . . . . 259

# CHAPTER 1

# Background

## THE CURRICULUM ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

The Joint Committee on Evaluation (JCE) is an advisory committee to the Department of Education and Training on questions dealing with measurement, evaluation, and curriculum assessment in Manitoba. More specifically, the JCE advises on the provincial curriculum assessment program. A brochure, entitled Using Assessment Results, sanctioned by the JCE, and published by Manitoba Education and Training, outlines the purpose of this program which is:

> "to measure the broad goals and objectives of the Manitoba curriculum, to point out the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum, and to aid in determining the degree to which the curriculum has been implemented (p.1)."

Further, the formally stated objectives of the Curriculum Assessment program are outlined in the mandate of the JCE and appear as follows:

"
- to provide indicators of the level of student achievement in the Province of Manitoba;
- to obtain data on student achievement that will assist in curriculum and program improvement, both at the provincial and local level;
- to assist teachers, schools, and school divisions in both student and system evaluation; and
- to help teachers improve their student evaluation skills."

Although the program uses student group performance data to measure achievement of objectives, it is not designed to test and make statements about individual students. For this reason, not all students need to be tested in any given assessment. Sampling techniques which take into account various identifiable sub-groups within the population ensure that the results of the assessment reflect the province as a whole. Schools and divisions who so desire may choose to test all students at the target grade levels. Division or school results can then be compared to provincial results on a group basis.

The typical procedures used in a curriculum assessment include review and selection of instructional objectives by qualified and experienced teachers in the field, preparation of appropriate test items based on the selected objectives by a competent contractor or a contractual team, and a review of the test items by an advisory committee (the Technical Advisory Committee (or TAC)) composed of subject area and assessment consultants, teachers, and university professors. In order to ascertain practitioners' opinions on various aspects of the curriculum and its degree of implementation, each curriculum assessment typically includes a survey of the teachers involved in the subject area and grade level under investigation.

Following the administration of tests and the scoring and coding of results, a preliminary report is prepared containing the outline of the test content, the means and standard deviations of the results for each subtest area, a frequency distribution for each subtest area, and a distribution of students' responses for each multiple-choice and short-answer question. This preliminary report provides provincial results which in turn enable schools or school divisions which have opted for the total participation of their students to analyze their results and compare them to provincial results.

Subsequent discussions and analysis of the preliminary report and the teacher survey by contractors and TAC members results in the production of a final report and a summary report. The JCE reviews and recommends acceptance of the final and summary reports.

One final component, a comparison test, is included in assessment projects where previous assessments have been conducted. The purpose of this component is to provide the province with information as to any change in achievement relative to program objectives and/or program implementation over time. Data are gathered to respond to these questions by re-administering components of previous testing programs which are appropriate to the current curriculum and which can be machine scored and subjected to tests of statistical significance.

Recently, in the Province of Manitoba, the assessment program has attempted, where possible, to provide separate testing and reporting for three identifiable client groups in the educational system: English language, French immersion, and Franco-Manitoban students. The current social studies assessment was designed for English language students only. The social studies curriculum for French immersion and Franco-Manitoban students will be the subject of an assessment in 1991.

## THE 1989 SOCIAL STUDIES ASSESSMENT

As part of its ongoing activities, the Assessment Section of the Curriculum Services Branch initiated this assessment of the grade 4, grade 8, and grade 10 Social Studies curricula in the spring of 1988. Test administration took place in June, 1989. The subject and grade levels selected were approved by the Minister of Education and Training based on recommendations from the Joint Committee on Evaluation and correspond to a concern expressed by the Curriculum Policy Review Committee to assess curricula according to the current school cycles of Early, Middle and Late years.

The main component of the Social Studies Assessment was the student testing program which sought to ascertain the level of student achievement relative to the general and grade level objectives under review.

The Social Studies Curriculum identifies four categories of general objectives: knowledge; thinking and research skills; attitudes and values; social participation. These are described in the Overview to the 1985 Social Studies Curriculum as follows:

> "Knowledge objectives identify the subject matter which students are expected to acquire, understand, and use, usually divided into facts, concepts, and generalizations. . . (p.9). Thinking and research skills objectives are to assist students to develop divergent thinking skills and such research skills as gathering and interpreting data and drawing conclusions more effectively. . .(p.10). Attitudes and values objectives are to assist students to develop attitudes, feelings, sensitivities, interests, and values which enable them to become more effective and responsible citizens. . .(p.11). Social participation objectives are designed to help develop informed people who will participate effectively with others to achieve mutual goals, participate actively in society (i.e., to criticize it constructively and to work to improve it where necessary), and participate in group discussion and group decision making. . .(pp.11-12)."

Included as a second component of this evaluation was a teacher survey designed to gauge program implementation from the teachers' point of view, at each of the grade levels selected for testing.

The third component of this evaluation was a re-administration of the 1984 tests at the grade 3, 6, 9, and 12 levels. This re-testing was undertaken in order to assess changes in student performance over time.

Exceptionally, for this assessment, a student observational study and teacher interviews were undertaken at the grade 4 level.

Published documents and reports which relate to the 1989 Social Studies Assessment are:

- Grade 4 Student Test
- Grade 8 Student Test
- Grade 10 Student Test
- Grade 4 Teacher Survey
- Grade 8 Teacher Survey
- Grade 10 Teacher Survey
- Preliminary Report
- Final Report
- Summary Report

The following chapters of this report present information on methodology, student results from the grade 4, 8, and 10 written tests, the grade 4 student observational study, results from the grade 4, 8, and 10 teacher surveys, the grade 4 teacher interviews, comparison testing from 1984 to 1989, and a final chapter summarizing the Social Studies Assessment.

# CHAPTER 2

# Methodology

In this chapter the methodology used to assess the effectiveness of the Social Studies curriculum is described. This includes sampling and test design as well as scoring and analysis of results for each component of the 1989 assessment.

## SAMPLING DESIGN

The sampling design used in the Social Studies Assessment in 1989 varies according to the component being assessed: student testing, comparison testing, teacher surveys, student observations and teacher interviews. In both 1984 and 1989, the students involved in the assessment are those public school students involved in full-year or second-semester programs receiving Social Studies instruction in English (i.e., excluding "Français" and French immersion students) whose names appeared on class lists provided for purposes of assessment. Teachers involved are those at the appropriate grade levels providing Social Studies instruction in English.

### Student Testing - Grades 4, 8, and 10

In order to generate a sample for each grade level of the assessment, a random sample was drawn by systematically selecting each tenth student from the class lists provided by public schools in the province. Table 2.1 below provides the number of students in each sample as well as the number of actual tests returned and the corresponding return rates.

**Table 2.1**

Student Testing - Grades 4, 8, and 10
Sampling Statistics

| | Sample Size | Test Returns | Return Rate |
|---|---|---|---|
| Grade 4 | 1,314 | 1,198 | 89% |
| Grade 8 | 1,241 | 1,085 | 87% |
| Grade 10 | 993 | 799 | 81% |

## Comparison Testing - 1984 & 1989

In 1984, a random sample of Manitoba students from grades 3, 6, and 9 was selected for purposes of assessment in Social Studies in a manner similar to the one described above. The statistical design for grade 12 in 1984 as well as for all grades in 1989 was a stratified cluster sample with clusters (schools) within each stratum being selected with probability proportional to the number of students in the schools at the time of registration. It is to be noted that because all courses except English Language Arts are optional at the grade 12 level, enrolment in English 300/305 and 301/304 was used as the criteria to identify grade 12 students for the assessments. Table 2.2 below provides the relevant statistics on sample size, actual test returns, and the return rates.

Table 2.2

Comparison Testing 1984 & 1989
Sampling Statistics

| | No. of Schools | Sample Size No. of Students | Test Returns | Return Rate |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade 3 (1984) | N/A | 1,304 | 1,213 | 93% |
| Grade 3 (1989) | 34 | 1,350 | 1,278 | 95% |
| Grade 6 (1984) | N/A | 1,377 | 1,254 | 91% |
| Grade 6 (1989) | 41 | 1,337 | 1,198 | 90% |
| Grade 9 (1984) | N/A | 1,307 | 1,150 | 88% |
| Grade 9 (1989) | 25 | 1,641 | 1,242 | 76% |
| Grade 12 (1984) | 21 | 1,214 | 869* | 72% |
| Grade 12 (1989) | 17 | 1,875 | 1,349 | 72% |

*in 1984, 832 cases were retained for analysis

## Teacher Surveys - 1989

The sample for the teacher surveys was composed of a random selection of approximately 50% of grade 4 and grade 8 teachers, and a complete survey of Geography 100 and 101 teachers identified from the teacher-generated Professional School Personnel files. Table 2.3 below provides the relevant figures.

Table 2.3

Teacher Surveys 1989
Population and Sampling Statistics

| Grade Enrolment | Target Population | Sample Size | Survey Returns | Return Rate |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade 4 | 682 | 300 | 254 | 85% |
| Grade 8 | 488 | 295 | 247 | 84% |
| Grade 10 | 278 | 278 | 255 | 92% |

## Student Observational Study and Teacher Interviews

The sample groups of students for the observational component of the 1989 assessment were drawn from the selection of grade 4 classrooms retained for student testing. In all, 30 classrooms were selected from which four students from each were randomly selected to form the observational groups. The 30 classroom teachers of these students were selected to be interviewed. See Table 2.4 below.

Table 2.4

Student Observational Study and Teacher Interviews
Population and Sampling Statistics - Grade 4

| Eligible Population (No. of Schools) | Sample Population (No. of Groups/Teachers) | Number of Students Participating |
|---|---|---|
| 381 | 30 | 120 |

## TEST DESIGN

Student tests at the three grade levels (4, 8, 10) identified for the 1989 assessment consisted mainly of select-type items, usually multiple-choice, and a few supply-type items at each grade level. The items were created to reflect the objectives of the curricula which were being assessed.

Comparison tests consisted of a re-administration of the 1984 tests in grades 3, 6, 9, and 12 with a view to establishing statistical comparisons of differences in mean response rates on the subtests which could be scored objectively.

Teacher surveys were designed to solicit information on various questions related to curriculum implementation in Social Studies. Items on the surveys sought information on teacher background, school organization, rationale for teaching Social Studies, the curriculum guide, teaching resources and strategies, evaluation, and professional development.

Teacher interviews were conducted to obtain a greater insight into teacher opinion on these questions. The interviews were recorded and transcribed for subsequent analysis. The student observational study consisted of a series of four group tasks designed to delve more deeply into student understanding of the concept of community. Student output was observed, recorded, and transcribed for analysis.

## SCORING AND ANALYSIS

After the coding and scoring of supply-type items, responses were analyzed by computer. Item analysis was conducted on items scanned. For objective items which could be grouped into subtests, means and standard deviations were calculated. Data from the observational study and the teacher interviews were categorized and analyzed to reflect obvious trends or commonalities in output.

# CHAPTER 3

# Grade Four Written Test

The grade 4 Social Studies curriculum includes the four general Social Studies objectives set out in Chapter 1. This part of the Assessment, based on a written test, was directed at examining all four objectives.

The assessment of the grade 4 curriculum was complicated by its structure. While the first unit of the curriculum (Locating People and Places in the World) is common for all children in the province, the remaining units (World Communities) may be taught by selecting from a wide range of possible topics. Consequently, there was no unit with a common body of content which could be used as a basis for testing. As a result, assessment items centred on concepts and generalizations common to any world community that might have been studied by a grade four class.

Potential limitations involved in using a paper and pencil test with grade 4 students should be noted. Children at this grade level may have:

1. relatively limited reading abilities;
2. a relatively short attention span;
3. a lack of practice with multiple choice items;
4. limited practice in writing long-answer responses in a short time period; and
5. limited experience with higher level thinking skills in written formats.

These limitations had implications for the assessment and were considered in selecting topics and objectives that lent themselves to a written test at this level and in designing test items.

The testing instrument was arranged so that the multiple choice items came first in the test and those questions which required the children to write sentence answers came last. This was done to simplify administration of the test to fourth grade students and to accommodate the different rates that students would take to complete the longer written answers.

## KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES

A total of 46 questions was developed to assess students' achievement of knowledge objectives. These items, as noted earlier, were directed more to underlying concepts and generalizations rather than to the facts related to the study of any one community.

The items comprising the knowledge subtest will not be analyzed in numerical order but, rather, in terms of the various objectives which were being tested. In order to facilitate this process, items were grouped into subtests dealing with the concept of community, community situation, meeting needs and wants, quality of life, knowledge of a specific community, and general information. Analysis and evaluatory comments on the results were derived from discussions between the Teacher Advisory Committee and the Contract Team members.

### CONCEPT OF COMMUNITY

The major concept of the grade 4 Social Studies program is the concept of community. The focus on this concept and its significance to people's lives was introduced in the grade 3 program where students studied their own community and then compared it either to a Manitoba community or to another Canadian or world community.

The study of the students' home community in grade 3 is critical to the study of the remaining units in grade 3 and all of the grade 4 program. Knowledge of their home community becomes the base against which children check their understanding of other communities and against which they make comparisons and contrasts. In grade 4 the concept of community is to be studied in a world context. For this reason the grade 4 assessment contains several items which explored students' understanding of the concept of community.

The first of these is item 96 where students were required to complete the sentence, *"A community is ______________".* Responses from this item were categorized to assess the student's understanding of the concept. Thirty-three percent (33%) of the sample of students responded with an answer which stated that a community was either a place or a group of people (Category A below). Forty-three percent (43%) expanded on this answer to make it clear that the community had interaction among the people and the place (Category B below). Only 1% of the students implied that a community was a cultural entity (Category C below). This type of open-ended question, however, does not automatically assure that students will provide the best, correct, or most complete answer, and one would not expect students of this age to provide more rather than less information without prompting.

Examples of student responses in each of these categories follow:

Category A

> *"A community is a place where there is a number of stores."*
> *"A community is made up of several people."*
> *"A community is a lot of people and schools and houses and stores."*

Category B

> *"A community is a place where a lot of people live together."*
> *"A community is a group of people who depend on one another."*

Category C

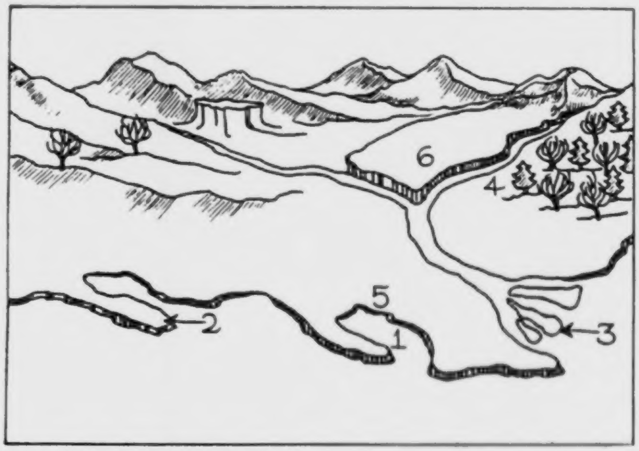
> *"A community is a place where lots of people live together. Where you share the same traditions."*
> *"A community is a group of people who share the same school, the same land, and the same ideas."*

In general, students seem to have a rudimentary understanding of the concept of community as used in the Social Studies program. However, since this concept is critical to all of the grade 4 program, the clear articulation of the attributes of the concept of community provided in the curriculum guidelines for grade 4 teachers should be understood and implemented.

## COMMUNITY SITUATION

Several items were included to assess students' understanding of the impact of the environment or physical situation on the community. On two items (85, 86) where students were asked about the impact of the environment on the community, 72% and 85% respectively, responded accurately. This was considered to be a satisfactory performance by the Technical Advisory Committee.

When asked to select a site for a community, (item 83 below), 94% of the children were able to make reasonable choices (C, D, or E):



*83.* ***Where would be the best place on this map to put a community?***

- *A)* *Number 2*
- *B)* *Number 3*
- *C)* *Number 4*
- *D)* *Number 5*
- *E)* *Number 6*

*84.* ***Why do you think this is the best place for a community?***

Having selected a location, they were also able in item 84 to support their choices with appropriate information. It should be noted that students do not necessarily respond with more than one piece of information at this age. On this item, 39% were able to provide one piece of information; 31% were able to provide two pieces of information; and 20% indicated an understanding of the relationships between the two pieces of information.

Sample answers for three of the chosen locations are outlined below:

Location C (number 4)

> *"It is just the right space. There is water near it to drink, swim and travel."*
> *"You could keep your house warm. You could have fish for food."*
> *"There are trees for firewood."*
> *"The trees are for protection."*
> *"You could use the trees to build your house, water to drink and travel."*

Location D (number 5)

> *"The ground is flat. You would have a nice view."*
> *"There is lots of room for farming. Places to fish nearby."*
> *"It has a place where boats can go for shelter and fishing."*
> *"There is a water supply and its easier to grow food near water."*

Location E (number 6)
*"It is higher up and you can see down below."*
*"It is high off the ground so if it floods it would flow away quickly."*

The responses to these questions were considered to be very satisfactory as children were able to place themselves in the situation depicted and support their site selections by using the information in the picture and their own knowledge of communities.

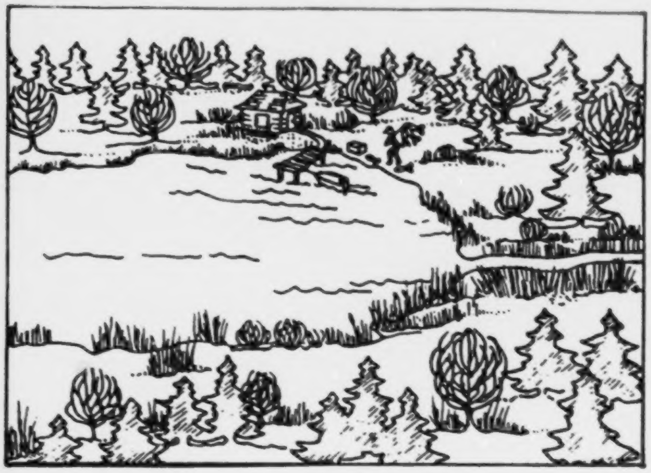
## MEETING NEEDS/WANTS

Another attribute of communities is that they satisfy people's needs and wants. Items 78 and 79 tested students' understanding of which foods were available within the community and which ones had to be brought from other parts of the world. The results of 78% on item 78 and 73% on item 79 were considered satisfactory by the TAC.

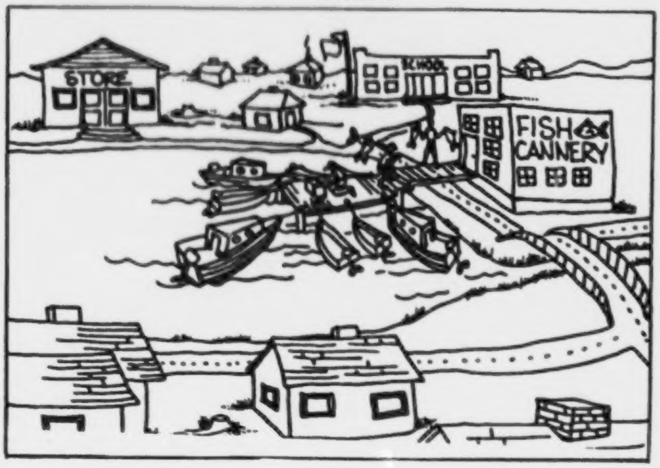
## QUALITY OF LIFE

The grade 4 program also emphasizes the need for the students to understand both the relationship of the community to its surrounding environment and the impact of the environment on the quality of life of the people in the community. Items 87-90 attempted to assess the children's understandings of these relationships. These items are reproduced below:

PICTURE A



PICTURE B



87. *You can see that many changes have taken place from Picture A to Picture B. Which change from Picture A to Picture B makes the biggest difference to the land?*

*A) The trees were cut down*
*B) Roads were built*
*C) A bridge was built*
*D) Homes were built*
*E) A school was built*

88. *Tell why you think this made the biggest difference to the environment.*

89. *When the community grew, Mr. Brown's life changed. Do you think Mr. Brown's life became better or worse?*

*A) Better*
*B) Worse*

90. *Why do you think his life was better or worse?*

On item 87, 62% of the students said that cutting down the trees had the biggest impact on the environment, while 19% said the fact that homes were built was the biggest change. On one hand, students stated that cutting down trees destroyed the scenery, eliminated wildlife and increased pollution. On the other hand, students felt that trees were good for producing paper, the increased space provided for more homes to be built, and made more room for farming and growing food.

Items 89 and 90 were related to students' perceptions of the quality of life which resulted from the changes to the environment. Sixty-one percent (61%) thought that the quality of life was improved by the changes to the environment (that is, from wilderness to community), while 36% thought it was made worse.

The reasons given for considering that the change from wilderness to community improved the quality of life centred around the fact that life would be easier, that people could buy items from the store, and have more company (friends and people to talk to).

The reasons given by those who thought that the change would have a negative impact on the environment centred around the fact that there would be increased noise and air pollution, more congestion and increased competition for resources (*"Mr. Brown didn't get as many fish anymore."*).

The preceding discussion shows that students were able to make judgements about the quality of life before and after changes to the environment, and to support their opinions with information from the pictures and from their own past learning and experience. The TAC considered the student responses on this section to be satisfactory.

## KNOWLEDGE OF A SPECIFIC COMMUNITY

Items 97-108 were designed to:

1. provide information on whether students were studying communities or countries.
2. assess what knowledge students were able to recall from their studies of world communities or countries.
3. assess what attitudes students had developed towards people in the community or country they studied.

Item 97 asked the students to identify a world community they had studied during the year. Twenty-one percent (21%) of the children identified a non-Canadian community and another 8% identified a Canadian community for a total of 29% who identified a community. On the other hand, 62% identified a country. These findings are consistent with the reports of teachers, the majority of whom state that they are teaching grade 4 Social Studies by using a country or a combined country/community approach, rather than a community approach.

According to the Teacher Survey, this could be due to a lack of appropriate materials available to take a community approach. Another reason provided by a few teachers is that they feel a country approach is more appropriate for grade 4 students to orient them to the world. Community studies are seen by these teachers to be appropriate as a part of the study of the country.

Items 98-101 asked the students to provide information about the community they studied under the headings of land, food, homes, and jobs. Student responses were coded in one of five categories A to E. Responses which repeated the question or restated it in another form were coded as Category A; those which provided one piece of credible or correct information on each topic were coded as Category B; those which provided two or more pieces of credible or correct information were coded as Category C; those which showed understanding of relationships between two pieces of information were coded as Category D; and those which gave incorrect information were coded as Category E.

This coding system was selected to try to distinguish among the levels of sophistication of knowledge of the students responding to the items. The mean response rate for all four items is outlined below in Table 3.1 according to the categories described above.

Table 3.1

Frequency Response Rate (in Percentages) of Students Providing Basic Information About a Community by Coding Category

| | Coding Categories* | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Information | Restates Question A | One Piece of Information B | Two or More Pieces of Information C | Relationships Between Information D | Incorrect E |
| Land | .2% | 25.3% | 59.1% | 5.8% | 5.0% |
| Food | .1 | 24.0 | 63.0 | 4.3 | 3.6 |
| Homes | .3 | 33.8 | 51.2 | 5.9 | 3.5 |
| Jobs | .4 | 34.0 | 51.3 | 3.3 | 4.6 |
| Overall Mean Response | .25 | 29.0 | 56.0 | 5.0 | 4.0 |

*The "no response" category has been ignored.

Student responses for these 4 items were considered to be satisfactory by the TAC.

When asked if there were serious problems in these communities, 40% of the students said there were serious problems in the countries they studied, while 55% said there were not serious problems. Answers for this item have to be considered in the light of the community studied. Some examples of the reasons students gave for saying that a country or community had problems are related to earthquakes in Japan, the burning of the rainforest in Brazil, the over-population of kangaroos in Australia, air pollution in Mexico, and robberies and kidnapping in Winnipeg. These answers were also considered by the TAC to be satisfactory for grade 4 students.

Items 107 and 108 asked students to indicate whether they would like to live in the community or country they had studied. Thirty-five percent (35%) of the students stated that they would like to live in the community/country studied, while 58% said they would not like to live there. It should be kept in mind that student responses were based on a wide variety of communities and countries.

The reasons students gave for wanting to live in another place included such things as wanting to live in a different place, living in a warm climate, seeing different animals, making new friends, and trying new foods.

Reasons students gave for not wanting to live in a different place included that they would miss Canada, the snow and the people, that they didn't speak the language, and that dangerous animals lived there.

Students' responses to items 107 and 108 were considered to be satisfactory by the TAC.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Another category of objectives studied in this assessment is related to general information about Canada and the world. Items 63-67 involved general knowledge about Canada. Table 3.2 below summarizes the correct responses provided by grade 4 students in 1989 and grade 3 students in 1984.

### Table 3.2

Knowledge of Canada Demonstrated by Grade 4 Students in 1989 and Grade 3 Students in 1984*

| Factual Knowledge of Canada | Correct Response Rate | |
|---|---|---|
| | 1989 | 1984 |
| Name of Country | 95% | 76% |
| Name of Province | 85 | 72 |
| Capital of Manitoba | 83 | 65 |
| The Two Neighbouring Provinces | 58 | 41 |
| Capital of Canada | 57 | 37 |

*Manitoba Social Studies Assessment 1984, Final Report.

While knowledge of this kind of information is not specifically required to meet the objectives of the grade 4 curriculum, it is interesting to note that student knowledge of these facts has increased considerably from grade 3 to grade 4. This is no doubt attributable, in part, to an increase in general knowledge of students as they get older. It may also be explained, in part, by the significant number of students who continued to study Canadian communities in grade 4. All in all, the TAC felt that these results were as expected.

In addition to the general knowledge items on Canada, students were queried on a number of mapping terms which are required in a study of world communities. Items 68 to 74 sought information on students' knowledge about the globe and world maps, while items 80 to 82 asked students to identify landforms from a picture. Student responses are summarized in Table 3.3 below.

## Table 3.3

Correct Student Response Rates to Knowledge of the Globe, World Maps, and Landforms

| Knowledge Source | Fact to Be Identified | Percentage Correctly Identified |
|---|---|---|
| Globe | North Pole | 86% |
| | line of latitude | 41* |
| World Maps | North America | 88 |
| | Australia | 72 |
| | Africa | 66 |
| | Pacific Ocean | 66 |
| | Atlantic Ocean | 51 |
| Landforms | bay | 69 |
| | delta | 47 |
| | peninsula | 40 |

* The low score on this item supports the conclusions drawn from the Thinking and Research Skills section of the Assessment and from the comments of the teachers in the survey about the placement of latitude and longitude at this grade level.

The results on these last ten items (68-74 and 80-82) were disappointing to many TAC members who felt that teachers spend an inordinate amount of time on the first unit of the curriculum, Locating People and Places in the World. It was expected that more students would be able to identify these major features of the world after spending such lengths of time on the unit.

Many teachers indicated in the Teacher Interviews that most of the landforms which students are asked to identify are too difficult for grade 4 students and that these should be removed from the grade 4 program. The Technical Advisory Committee recommends that the range of landforms suggested for study in the curriculum be reviewed.

## THINKING AND RESEARCH SKILLS

A total of 40 items were used to assess students' thinking and research skills. These items which were directed at assessing the achievement of objectives relating to mapping skills, locating and gathering information, finding main ideas, and providing evidence and reasons for answers were drawn from typical social studies sources such as maps, charts, graphs, pictures, tables of contents, and indexes from reference books.

For the most part these items were self-contained. That is, they did not require students to possess knowledge beyond that directly related to the specific skill being assessed. Thus in some of the mapping items, for example, students had to know compass directions but everything else needed to answer correctly was contained in the items. The exceptions were the items in which students were asked to support their views with evidence. In some of these, students had to go beyond the information provided in order to give appropriate answers.

## MAPPING SKILLS

The four specific mapping skills that were assessed involved interpreting map grids and a legend, using a scale, and using compass directions. In addition, one item involved making an inference from information contained in a map. A summary of student scores on the mapping subtests is shown in Table 3.4 below.

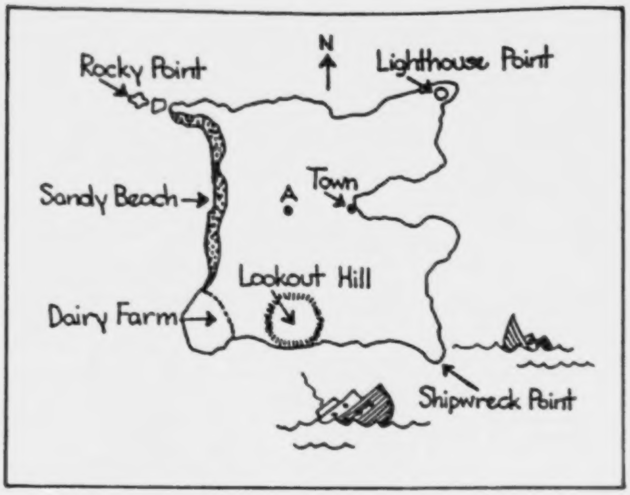
Table 3.4

Mean Correct Response Rate on Mapping Skills Subtest of Grade 4 Students

| Subtest Components | Item Numbers | Percentage Correct |
|---|---|---|
| Compass directions | 10, 11, 12 | 64% |
| Simple grids | 13, 14, 15 | 77 |
| Global grid | 27 | 41 |
| Legends | 16, 18, 19 | 61 |
| Scale | 17 | 52 |
| Subtest mean | | 63 |
| Subtest mean without Item 27 | | 66 |

### Using Compass Directions

The three items (10, 11 and 12) in this subtest were based on a simple map that depicted an island with seven labelled features and an arrow indicating north. In each case students were required to select the location they would arrive at by starting at a given point and travelling in a specified direction. The items were sequenced in order of increasing difficulty with the first item involving the use of a cardinal compass direction, the second item an intermediate direction and the third item both a cardinal and an intermediate direction. The map and a sample item are shown below:



*11. If you start at point A and travel as far as you can to the* ***southwest,*** *you will come to*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *3.4%* | *A)* | *Sandy Beach.* |
| *22.7* | *B)* | *Shipwreck Point.* |
| *3.6* | *C)* | *Lighthouse Point.* |
| *4.3* | *D)* | *Rocky Point.* |
| *65.2* | *E)** | *the Dairy Farm.* |

Student responses paralleled the order of difficulty of these items with 71% (item 10) of the students using the cardinal direction correctly, 65% (item 11) using the intermediate direction correctly and 55% (item 12) using the combined cardinal and intermediate directions correctly. Those students who gave incorrect responses may either not have known these basic compass directions or they may have had difficulty applying them to finding locations on a map.

The TAC was satisfied with the results on this subtest in spite of the fact that they suggest that a substantial number of students would benefit from practice in using compass directions to solve practical locational problems. As suggested in the grade 4 curriculum, this sort of practice might best start with real-world exercises in and around schools and then progress to map applications similar to those in items 10, 11 and 12.

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*indicates the correct response for this and subsequent test questions.

## Interpreting Grids

The four items in this subtest required that students use grids to find or describe locations on maps. The first three items (13, 14 and 15) were based on a large scale map and involved the use of a simple grid, while the fourth item (27) was based on a simplified global grid system.

Mean response rates of 84% and 89% on items 13 and 14 respectively suggest that students had little difficulty in using a simple grid system to find locations. However, when asked to determine which of several coordinates named the location that was farthest from a given point (item 15), only 58% of the students were able to answer correctly. This latter item, which required that students find and compare five locations, was clearly difficult for many of them.

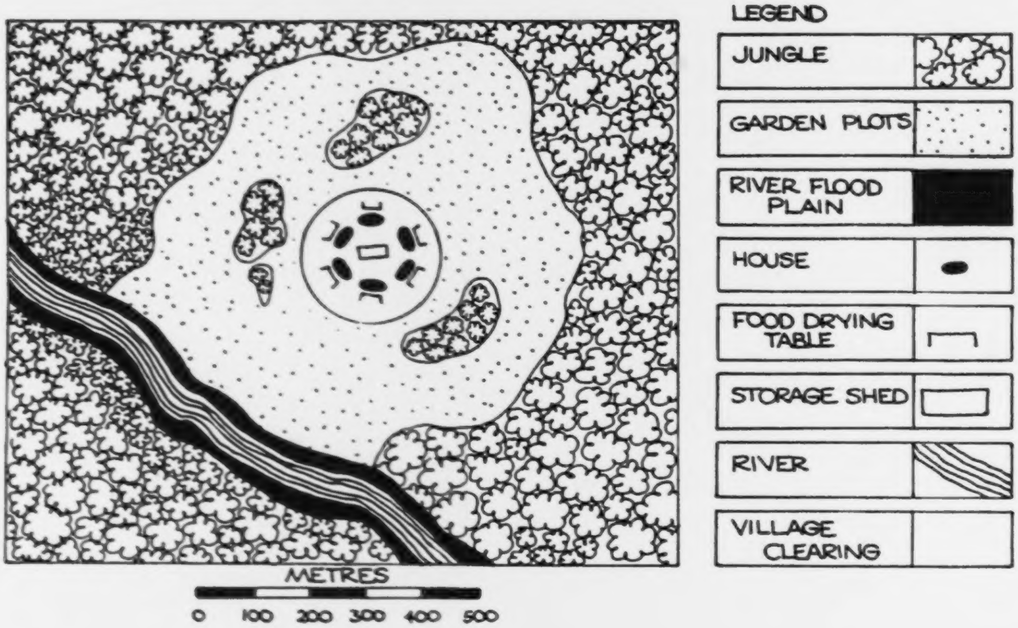
Even more difficult was the skill required in item 27. Here students were expected to use a global grid system involving degrees and cardinal compass directions. Only 41% of the students got this item correct. The inclusion of item 27 in the assessment was a matter of some debate. All of those involved in the development of the assessment instrument, and especially the classroom teachers on the Technical Advisory Committee, were of the view that the skills involved in this item are inappropriate for the large majority of grade 4 students and that they should probably be taken out of the grade 4 curriculum. Item 27 was seen as a means for assessing this view.

The TAC was satisfied with the results on this subtest which suggest that the large majority of students understand and can use grids as devices for solving simple locational problems. However, many students would benefit from practice with more complex problems in which they have to compare locations. Finally, the results also suggest that the use of a global grid involving degrees and compass directions is very difficult for most grade 4 students and that it might best be treated as an optional topic at this level.

## Interpreting Legends

This subtest consisted of three items based on a simple large scale map. Two items (16 & 18) involved the use of a legend to obtain a single piece of factual information while the remaining item (19) called for an inference based on several pieces of information revealed by the legend. The map and legend are shown below.

This is a map of a village in the Amazon Rainforest of Brazil



Student responses on these items varied and, in some respects, were rated more poorly than might be expected. While a very respectable 85% of the students were able to use the legend to identify houses (item 16), only 46% were able to determine that garden plots were the feature located next to the village clearing (item 18). In answering this latter item, 23% of the students thought that the answer was "jungle", a superficially plausible answer which suggests that they relied on a general impression of the map rather than on the more exact information contained in the legend. On the final item (19), 52% of the students used the several pieces of information provided by the map and the legend to infer that river travel was more probable than the alternative choices. A significant number of students (24%) selected horseback, a not unreasonable choice but one that is less likely given the information provided by the map and legend.

The results on item 16 indicate that most students understand the basic idea of a legend. However, student responses on items 18 and 19 may point to a tendency on the part of a number of students to rely on first impressions arising from a map. The answers selected by most of the students who got these items incorrect suggests that they did not check their first impressions or intuitions against the information contained in the legend. If this conclusion is correct, many students would benefit from practice with the sorts of skills required in items 18 and 19. In particular, they would benefit from inference and interpretation exercises in which they have to use a legend to dig for information and compare and support alternative answers.

## Using a Scale

The ability to estimate distances by means of a map scale was assessed through item 17 based on the same map that was used to assess the interpretation of legends. Students were asked to use a five segment scale, representing 500 metres, to estimate the approximate distance between two points on the map. Fifty-two percent of the students got this item correct. While this is quite a low rate of success, the concept of scale is often problematic for students at the grade 4 level. This is especially the case when the concept is taken beyond general notions of scale such as are involved in the use of toys and pictures as scale representations and it is applied in a manner that involves using a scale to measure distances. Another factor that may have contributed to such a large proportion of incorrect responses was the fact that students had to use the legend to locate at least one of the points that the distance estimate was based on. It is possible that some of the 15% of students who got the most basic legend item (16) incorrect are in fact able to use a scale but were prevented from doing so because item 17 also involved the use of a legend.

Whatever the sources of difficulty encountered in answering item 17, it seems evident that many students would benefit from further hands-on experiences such as are indicated in the grade 4 Social Studies curriculum for developing the concept of scale. Once the basic idea of scale as a representational device is understood, then it would be appropriate to give students further practice in applying it to mapping.

## LOCATING INFORMATION

The items in this part of the Assessment address four aspects of locating information: selecting the best sources for finding specific information (items 1 through 4); identifying which encyclopedia volumes contain given topics (items 5 & 6); using an index; and using a table of contents to locate topics (items 7, 8 & 9). The mean response rates on this subtest reported in Table 3.5 below were generally positive and considered satisfactory by the TAC.

Table 3.5

Mean Correct Response Rates of Grade 4 Students on the Information Locating Skills Subtest

| Subtest Components | Item Numbers | Percentage Correct* |
|---|---|---|
| Selecting appropriate sources of information | 1 - 4 | 78% |
| Selecting encyclopedia volumes | 5, 6 | 83 |
| Using an index and a table of contents | 7, 8, 9 | 71 |
| Subtest mean | | 78 |

*Calculated using individual item response rates and rounded to nearest whole number, for this and subsequent tables.

The results suggest that information locating skills are being thoroughly taught. The one area in which a considerable number of students had difficulty was in using a table of contents (item 8, 54% correct; item 9, 65% correct). For some, this may have been due to a failure to distinguish between page references that were the starting points for chapters and those that indicated topics within chapters. Given that these skills are practised in a number of subjects, those few difficulties indicated by the results on this subtest should be adequately addressed in the normal course of students' programs.

## GATHERING INFORMATION

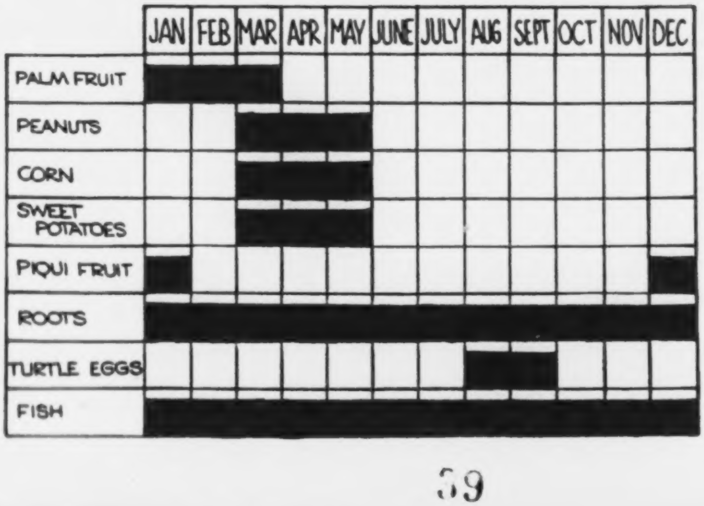
In order to answer the items in this subtest correctly students had to be able to gather information from two graphs, a chart and a pair of pictures. Their performance with each of these three representational devices is shown in Table 3.6.

**Table 3.6**

Mean Correct Response Rates of Grade 4 Students on Information Gathering Skills Subtest

| Subtest Components | Item Numbers | Percentage Correct |
|---|---|---|
| Graphs | 20,21,22,28,29 | 81% |
| Chart | 24, 25 | 75 |
| Pictures | 85, 86 | 79 |
| Subtest mean | | 79 |

Given the general level of difficulty of the items within this subtest, an overall mean of 79% was judged satisfactory for grade 4 students. For example, on the bar graph shown below, 80% of the students were able to name the two foods that are available for the shortest periods, 92% were able to name the two foods that are available throughout the year, and 71% identified the month of the year in which there is the largest selection of foods.



Look at the chart. It shows the food eaten by a tribe living in the Amazon Rain Forest. The dark bars show the times of year that they can get each kind of food.

| | JAN | FEB | MAR | APR | MAY | JUNE | JULY | AUG | SEPT | OCT | NOV | DEC |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| PALM FRUIT | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | | | | | | | |
| PEANUTS | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | | | | | |
| CORN | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | | | | | |
| SWEET POTATOES | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | | | | | |
| PIQUI FRUIT | ■ | | | | | | | | | | | ■ |
| ROOTS | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| TURTLE EGGS | | | | | | | | ■ | ■ | | | |
| FISH | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |

Given this very positive performance, it is likely that gathering information from the sorts of sources that were used in this subtest is being well taught, both in social studies and in other areas of the curriculum. The relatively small number of students who had difficulty with these items might benefit from further experience with gathering information from representational devices like those used in the assessment instrument, especially when that experience is given purpose through being embedded in concrete community studies.

## IDENTIFYING THE MAIN IDEA

The items in this part of the Assessment were based on the same chart and graphs that were used in the gathering information subtest. In each instance students were asked to identify a title or a statement that best captured the main idea being represented. The results are shown in Table 3.7 below.

Table 3.7

Mean Correct Response Rates of Grade 4 Students on Identifying the Main Idea Subtest

| Subtest Components | Item Numbers | Percentage Correct |
|---|---|---|
| Chart | 26 | 45% |
| Single Graph | 23 | 54 |
| Pair of Graphs | 30 | 76 |
| Subtest mean | | 59 |

In order to answer correctly, students had to take into account all aspects of each chart or graph and synthesize these aspects into an overall idea or relationship. In item 23, for example, which is based on the graph shown on page 24 (Rainforest bar graph), they had to avoid answers that were only partially correct:

*23. Which of these titles give the best idea of what the chart is about?*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *13.0%* | *A)* | *Rainfall and food supply* |
| *17.8* | *B)* | *How much food people eat* |
| *6.5* | *C)* | *Kinds of food and temperatures* |
| *54.3* | *D)** | *Kinds of food and when they are eaten* |
| *7.3* | *E)* | *Diet and health* |

These results suggest that more emphasis should be placed upon the teaching of higher order thinking skills. The skills involved in the items in this subtest are fairly complex for most grade 4 students and an overall success rate of 59% is not surprising. However, synthesis skills such as are required by these items are important and can, within the context of appropriate concrete experiences, be developed among students of this age.

It was suggested from the results in Table 3.6 above that some students would benefit from practice in gathering specific information when such practice is based on graphs and charts such as those in the assessment instrument and when it takes place in the context of concrete community studies. Such experiences also provide an ideal setting in which to encourage the sorts of higher order thinking skills that are represented by the items in this part of the assessment and which are fundamental to many areas of the curriculum.

## PROVIDING REASONS/EVIDENCE FOR CONCLUSIONS AND OPINIONS

The thinking skill common to the items in this subtest is the provision of evidence or reasons as justification for an answer given in a prior item. For example, using the map shown on page 12, students were first asked to select what they thought was the best location for a community (item 83) and then they were asked to explain their choice (item 84). As is the case with all the items in this subtest, appropriate answers required information beyond that which was contained in the item.

The focus of interest here is on the structure of students' responses and what this structure suggests about their preferred modes of thinking when responding to items like item 84. The particular content of students' answers is examined in the sections of the report that deal with knowledge objectives and value and attitude objectives. The structure of student answers was examined by categorizing them in terms of their complexity with respect to the scale shown in Table 3.8 below.

Table 3.8

Frequency Response of Grade 4 Students in Providing Reasons/ Evidence for Conclusions and Opinions on Selected Items*

| Response Category | Frequency |
|---|---|
| A. Repeats or rephrases question | 4% |
| B. Gives one credible piece of information or reason | 44 |
| C. Gives two or more credible pieces of information or reasons | 24 |
| D. Shows understanding of relationship between two pieces of information | 10 |
| E. Gives incorrect information | 14 |
| No Response | 5 |

* Includes items 84, 88, 90, 106, and 108. Item 95 was also intended to measure the skills being assessed in this subtest. However, because of the large proportion of students (69%) who responded to this item by simply rephrasing the question, the item was judged to be problematic and thus was omitted from this summarization.

Across the five categories in this analysis, 23% of the student's responses were judged to be inappropriate (incorrect response, item repeated, or item left blank). Of those responses that were categorized as appropriate, 44% consisted of a single piece of credible information, 24% contained two or more credible pieces of information, and 10% stated a relationship. When the results from categories B, C and D are grouped together, a total of 68% of the student's responses were judged as acceptable.

Two points should be kept in mind while interpreting these results. The first and most obvious one is that the limited writing skills of many grade 4 students are a significant barrier in responding to items such as those presented in this subtest. A student who responds with an isolated piece of information in writing may be capable of stating a relationship in a discussion situation. The second point is related to the open-ended nature of the task. The items did not request students to state a relationship. While the items clearly invited such a response, there was no indication that stating one or two isolated facts would not suffice. Given this, it is possible that some students, for whom writing skills were not a barrier, simply left a relationship implicit.

Even given these limiting conditions, the results suggest that many students would benefit from further practice with the sorts of thinking skills that are required by the items in this subtest. In particular, the results point to the importance of encouraging the higher order thinking skills that are involved in identifying evidence and relationships. With grade 4 students this can probably best take place through the frequent use of 'why?' items in the context of community studies involving a rich variety of concrete and hands-on learning experiences.

## ATTITUDES AND VALUES

In this section of the Assessment, students were asked to respond to 29 items designed to sample their perceptions related to the six attitudes and values objectives outlined in the grade 4 Social Studies curriculum (1982), and quoted below.

"The students should be able to:

- share and assess their views on different perceptions of needs and wants and the different ways in which they are met.
- question common stereotypes about various regions of the world and realize that very different ways of life and levels of development are present in each region.
- develop a tolerant attitude towards differences in culture (as represented by differences in how needs and wants are perceived and met).
- view differences among cultures as a variety of ways of meeting needs and wants.
- view their own way of life as one among many possible ones.
- indicate empathy for the problems faced by people as they attempt to meet their needs" (p.27).

The 29 items identified as belonging to this subtest have been grouped for analysis into three major components: quality of human life; similarity of human needs; and global education which was further sub-divided into cooperation and conflict, interdependence, altruism, national chauvinism, ethnocentrism, solving world problems, and studying world communities. It is important to keep in mind that, in a strict sense, there were no right or wrong answers to any of the attitude and value items. However, some responses were clearly more in accord with the objectives of the grade 4 curriculum than others.

## QUALITY OF COMMUNITY LIFE

This component addresses the general question of what students see as important determinants of the quality of community life and their perceptions of the quality of life in a culturally different community.

Items 75, 76 and 77 required students to indicate the relative importance that they place on three aspects of communities: technological devices, physical facilities, and people. All three items contained an example from each of these categories and in each item students were asked to indicate which example was "most important for making communities better". Student responses are shown in Table 3.9 below.

Table 3.9

Frequency Response of Student Perception of the Relative Importance of Selected Factors in the Quality of Community Life

| Factors | Item 75 | Item 76 | Item 77 | Mean Response Rate |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Technological Devices | Television (6%) | Telephones (22%) | Cars (6%) | 11% |
| Physical Facilities | Playgrounds (6%) | Libraries (29%) | Swimming pools (8%) | 14 |
| People | Friendly Neighbours (86%) | Teachers (47%) | Police (85%) | 73 |
| | (2% no response) | (2% no response) | (2% no response) | |

Students' responses clearly show they regard people as being far more important than technological devices and physical facilities in determining the quality of community life. Among the three examples of this human dimension, teachers fared considerably less well than did friendly neighbours and police. However, this may have been because the alternate choices that teachers were grouped with (telephones and libraries) were seen as more important by students than the alternate choices of technological devices and physical facilities for friendly neighbours (item 75), and police (item 77).

Items 89 and 90 came at the end of a sequence of items which required students to compare two drawings, one of a solitary cabin beside a lake in a wilderness setting and the other of the same location some time later as a small community. Item 89 asked students whether life had changed for the better or the worse with the advent of the community. In item 90 they were then asked to explain their answer.

Of the approximately 96% of students who responded to item 89, 61% thought that the quality of life had improved with the growth of the community while 36% thought that it had become worse. A sample of students' reasons (taken from an arbitrarily-selected sample of 100 test booklets) for their choices in item 89 provides further insights into their ideas about important aspects of the quality of life.

Among students who thought that life would be better in the community, the most frequent comments were related to having friends and not being lonely. A close second were the comments having to do with more and better food. These were followed by a variety of comments related to services, being a part of a money economy, and , as one student put it, being, "more civilized". For those who thought that life would be worse in the community, the most frequently expressed concern was that things would become noisier and in general less peaceful. Students also mentioned that there would be more to worry about and more work to do. Two other concerns mentioned by several students were that the supplies of such things as fish and land would soon be exhausted and that there would likely be more pollution.

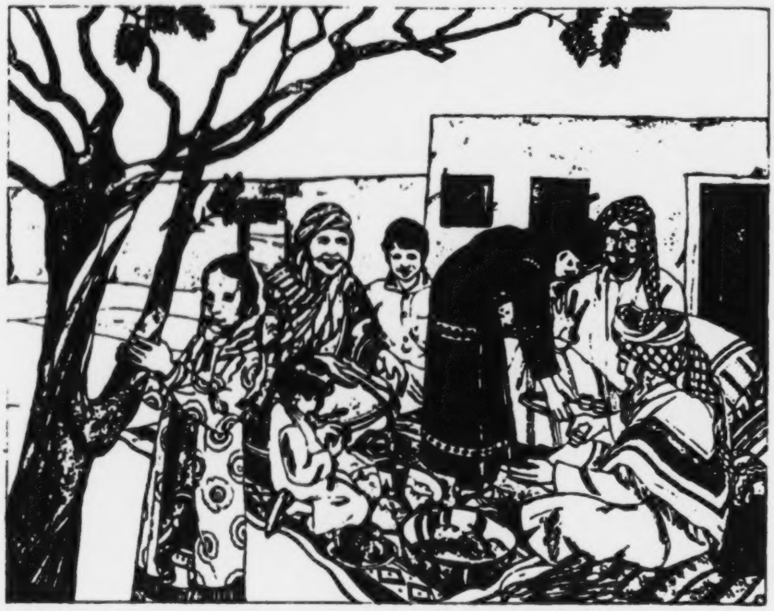
These reasons support the findings shown in Table 3.9 above. It is clear the students see people as the major determinant of the quality of community life. This is expressed primarily as a need for friends but it is also apparent that some students think too many people can be a negative factor. However, their written responses also point to a rich variety of other concerns that influence their views on quality-of-life. These include enjoyment, adequate resources, a clean environment, and access to services.

### Culturally Different Communities

The six items in this component of the quality-of-life subtest were intended to provide selected insights into students' perceptions of the quality of life in communities that are culturally distinct from their own. Four of the items (items 92-95) were based on a picture intended to suggest a community culturally distinct from those experienced by most Manitoba students while the remaining two items (items 107 and 108) were based on communities or countries that students selected from among those that they had studied in grade 4.

Items 92 to 95 were presented along with a picture of a happy, healthy, well-fed and well-clothed family having a meal on a carpet out-of-doors with some buildings in the background. The picture, which is shown below, was selected to communicate to students a very positive image of a family in a culture that is distinctly different from their own. With this context before them, students were asked to choose descriptors that they thought best represented certain dimensions of life in communities such as the one shown in the picture, to make an overall judgement about the quality of life in such communities, and then to provide reasons for this judgement.

THIS IS A PICTURE OF A SMALL COMMUNITY. IN THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS PLEASE GIVE YOUR IDEAS ABOUT WHAT LIFE IS LIKE IN SMALL COMMUNITIES LIKE THIS ONE.



The items were designed to elicit a generalized response with the particular picture serving as a stimulus. That is, they asked students to express opinions about, *"...communities like this one..."* rather than about the particular community of the family in the picture. In order to reduce the likelihood of students treating this group of items as a picture analysis task, the picture provided no direct evidence relating to the two quality-of-life indicators, water and education, that students were asked to make judgments about. In spite of these precautions, it is possible that a number of students responded primarily in terms of the particular family in the picture. One piece of evidence for this is the rather high "I don't know" response rate (18%) which may have resulted in part from some students deciding not to answer when they could not find direct evidence in the picture. The particularity of many students' written answers for item 95 (as observed in the sample of 100 student test booklets) also suggests a picture analysis of the items. However, in making these responses, many students were clearly going beyond the direct evidence that was available in the picture. For example, students' comments include references to war, disease, working together, lack of food, and environmental problems, none of which are portrayed in the picture. Thus, even though their responses suggest that a number of students were attempting to provide answers for the particular picture rather than for, *"...communities like this one...,"* they do reveal a number of associations that the picture called up in their minds. An attempt was made to analyze the responses on a positive to negative scale as outlined in Table 3.10 below.

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## Table 3.10

Frequency Response of Students to Quality-of-Life Statements on a 3-point Scale

| Positive to Negative Scale | Item 92 | Item 93 | Item 94 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Most positive rating | Plenty of clean water (18%) | A high school education (6%) | Have a good life (41%) |
| Middle rating | Plenty of water but no clean water (21%) | Only an elementary school education (15%) | * |
| Least positive Rating | Not enough water (42%) | Do not go to school (59%) | Do not have a good life (38%) |
| Other responses | Don't know (17%) | Don't know (18%) | Don't know (18%) |
| | No response (3%) | No response (3%) | No response (3%) |

* In item 94 students were asked to indicate whether or not they think people living in communities like the one shown have a good life. There was no middle choice.

Of the approximately 80% who made a judgement about water and schooling in items 92 and 93, only 18% and 6% respectively chose the most positive options. Alternatively, over half chose the least positive options. To the extent that water supply and schooling are seen by students as indicators of the quality of life, their responses to items 92 and 93 suggest a fairly negative image of the quality of life in communities such as might have been typified for them by the picture.

In items 94 and 95, students were first asked to make an overall assessment of the quality of life and then to provide reasons for their assessment. In making their overall assessment, their choice of responses was positive, negative, or "I don't know". Of the 80% who made a choice, just under a half said that people in communities like the one in the picture do not have a good life. Students' written explanations provide some insight into the sorts of considerations that influenced their judgments.

Students' criteria for their quality-of-life judgments were varied but some themes are apparent. The prominence of water and schools in their answers in item 95 is not surprising given that items 92 and 93 dealt with these factors. Other themes had to do with the availability and selection of food, physical comfort and ease of life, health, the cleanliness of the environment, people working together, happiness, and security related issues such as family and friends, general safety, and war or peace. A fairly common response in item 95, and one that suggested a beginning understanding of the matter of differing cultural perspectives, was based on the argument that the quality of life was good from the point of view of the people in the community because they had grown up there and it was normal to them.

Further insight into students' views on quality-of-life is provided by their responses to items 107 and 108 in which they were asked to indicate whether or not they would like to live in a community that they selected from among those that they had studied in grade 4 and then to explain their choices. Of the 93% of the students who responded to item 107, 35% said that they would like to live in the community they had studied and 58% said that they would not. In item 108 it is apparent that some students were very impressed by problems in the communities they had studied. A representative sample (taken from the 100 sample booklets mentioned above) of students' written explanations for their choices are listed below. In each case, the community or country that students were commenting on is shown in parentheses.

The 35% of students who stated they would like to live in the community they had studied said things like:

> *"They have nice homes and environments (Japan);*
> *Their food is good and healthy (Japan);*
> *It is a lot like my community (Australia);*
> *Its not cold and they have beautiful beaches (Jamaica);*
> *I would like to see a different town (fishing community)."*

while those who stated they would not like to live in the community they had studied said things like:

> *"I don't like the way they live. They have a different style of life (Zaire);*
> *They sleep on the ground and they work harder (Africa);*
> *They're poor and they don't have proper stuff. (Peru); and*
> *Its crowded and polluted (China) (Mexico)."*

In summary, the results of these items on quality-of-life have several important implications for the study of world communities with grade 4 students. First, students' comments suggest that many of them are able to understand issues and make judgements related to the quality of life in the communities they study. In fact, their comments indicate that they are making these judgements, albeit at times in a rather limited and stereotypical manner. Given this, it would make sense to treat quality-of-life considerations as a normal part of studying communities and to engage students in open and balanced explorations of factors affecting quality-of-life. Further, the sorts of concerns that students have identified in their written comments are probably representative of the issues that are really important to them and can serve as a useful guideline in identifying issues that will engage students' interest.

Second, given that the stimulus picture for items 92 through 95 portrayed a very positive family scene, students who responded negatively may have been equating marked cultural differences with a lower quality of life. To the extent that this is the case, these results have at least two implications for the study of culturally distinct communities. The first implication is that greater emphasis needs to be placed on assisting students to recognize that quality of life should be judged, to a large extent, situationally within the customs and beliefs of the communities that they are studying. This suggests paying more attention to learning experiences that promote empathy and the ability to imagine alternative perspectives. The second implication has to do with the possibility that students perceive 'third world' communities as being dominated by problems. Clearly there are problems in any community and significantly more in some than in others. While the grade 4 curriculum recommends that such problems be addressed in a realistic manner, it also takes the position that the basic focus for students should be on the study of functional communities. Further, it should be remembered that the curriculum is also directed at the development of understanding and empathy for ways of life in settings that are geographically and culturally different from the settings in which students live.

## SIMILARITY OF HUMAN NEEDS

An important goal of the grade 4 curriculum is to help students understand that, underlying the cultural diversity that they are studying, there are common human needs. Three items (91, 105 and 106) were used to determine students' perceptions with respect to the universality of human needs. The responses to items 91 and 105 are shown in Table 3.11 below.

In item 91 students were asked to judge the degree of similarity between their own needs and the needs of the people living in communities such as the one shown in the picture on page 31. In item 105 they were asked to make the same judgement but with respect to one of the communities that they had studied in grade 4.

## Table 3.11

Frequency Response of Grade 4 Students on Items Relating to the Similarity of Human Needs

| Students' Perception | Item 91 | Item 105 |
|---|---|---|
| Just the same as my needs | 7% | 15% |
| Pretty much the same as my needs | 23 | 43 |
| Very different from my needs | 43 | 36 |
| I don't know | 24 | * |
| No response | 3 | 6 |

* "I don't know" was not available as a choice in item 105.

These two items, although similar in structure and intent, do have two differences that should be noted. First, item 105 did not provide students with an "I don't know" option, an omission that may have caused some of the differences that are apparent in students' responses to items 91 and 105. Second, and probably more important, in responding to these two items students were frequently responding on the basis of very different types of communities. While item 91 was based on a picture that was intended to evoke a strong sense of cultural distinctiveness; in item 105, students were responding in terms of communities that they selected from the ones that they had studied. With respect to the cultural distinctiveness of these latter communities, data from the Teacher Survey indicate that 56% of the communities that teachers selected for study were from Canada, Europe and Australia. Similarly, examination of item 97 from the sample of 100 student test booklets referred to previously indicated that 62% of the 99 communities that students identified were from Canada, Europe and Australia. Thus the cultural characteristics of the communities that served as the basis for judging the similarity or dissimilarity of needs in item 105 were, on the whole, closer to those in Manitoba communities than was the case for the community suggested by the picture that was the basis for item 91.

That there is a relationship between the cultural distinctiveness of a community and students' perceptions of how similar or dissimilar the needs of the people in that community are to their own needs is suggested by the data in Table 3.12 below.

## Table 3.12

Student Judgements of the Similarity/Dissimilarity of Human Needs as related to Cultural Distinctiveness* N = 99*

| Cultural Distinctiveness | Rating Frequencies | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Just the same as mine | Pretty much the same as mine | Very Different from mine | Total |
| Communities likely to be seen by students as having greater cultural similarity to most Manitoba communities (Canada, Europe, and Australia) | 11 | 34 | 16 | 61 |
| Communities likely to be seen by students as having less cultural similarity to most Manitoba communities (South America, Middle East, Asia) | 3 | 11 | 24 | 38 |

* This table is based on the responses contained in a sample of 100 test booklets. In one booklet the name of the community on which the responses to item 105 were based was omitted.

People living in communities or countries with cultural characteristics that are clearly distinct from those experienced by most of the students are more likely to be rated as having very different needs than are people living in communities with more similar cultures. A similar relationship is evident in the other two response categories, suggesting that many students are in fact equating cultural differences with differences in human needs.

Further evidence of this confusion of cultural differences and needs can be seen in the sorts of reasons students gave for their judgements about the similarity or dissimilarity of their needs and the needs of the people in the communities that they studied (item 106). Selected from the same 100 test booklets on which Table 3.12 is based, 15% of students identified basic human needs as being similar across cultures. In studying Zaire and Australia, for example, students made statements such as: *"They are people just like us"*. Forty-three percent of students felt that the needs of the people they studied in such places as Iceland, Moscow, Japan, or South America were just about the same as in their culture. They said things like: *"They may look different but they still need food like you and me"*. Some 36% of the selected sample of students felt that their needs were very different from those of people in Peru, Mexico, Amazonia, or Zambia. Some said: *"We are wealthy, they are poor."*; or *"They eat food that is different from ours"*. While a few of the reasons go right to the point and state that, in essence, all humans have the same basic needs, the majority of reasons given show that students are making their judgements based on particular circumstances and cultural characteristics.

Analysis of the responses in this component of the subtest indicate that as many as half of the students tend to see through cultural differences to the underlying similarity of human needs. This in itself is significant in that the perception of underlying similarities is argued by developmental psychologists to be a more difficult task than the recognition of superficial differences. At the same time, however, a large number of students appear not to be making a distinction between basic human needs and cultural differences. These students might benefit from a greater emphasis on activities that encourage the development of empathy and perspective taking. In-depth studies which emphasize the common needs that underlie cultural differences and comparisons between how people live in the students' own, and in culturally different communities, would also be useful.

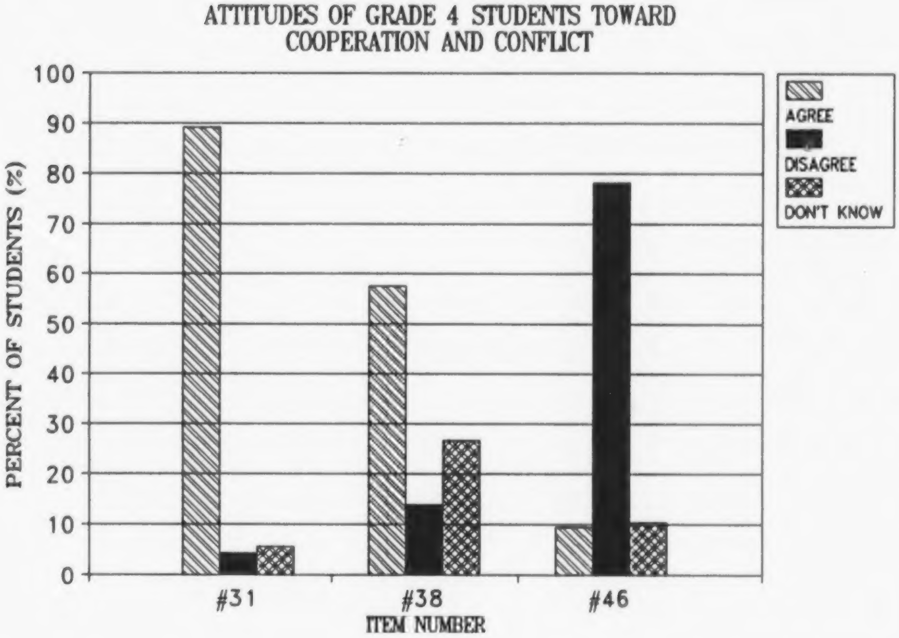
## GLOBAL EDUCATION

The next seven components of the attitudes and values subtest of the assessment consist of two or three items each. Each group of items addresses one attitudinal area that is an important aspect of the grade 4 curriculum's emphasis on global education. The results in each case are displayed through a set of bar graphs. Basically, in these components, students were asked to agree, disagree or indicate a lack of opinion to a series of statements related to global education. The results of the items in each attitudinal area have not been averaged since, although they were designed to address one basic idea, it is possible that they were not perceived this way by students.

### Cooperation and Conflict

Student responses for items 31, 38 and 46, which focus on attitudes toward cooperation and conflict among communities and countries, are shown in Figure 3.1 below.

Figure 3.1



In items 31 and 46, students report placing a very high value on cooperation as a means of resolving disagreement. In item 31, almost 90% said that they think *"talking things over with another community is better than fighting"*. When they were confronted with the proposition that it might be necessary for Canada to fight with another country in the event of disagreement (item 46), a slightly lower 78% said that they would not agree with conflict as a means of resolution. While this is still a very high proportion, it does suggest that when the frame of reference is shifted from conflict between communities to conflict between countries, a slightly larger proportion (12%) of students may think that fighting is a reasonable option.

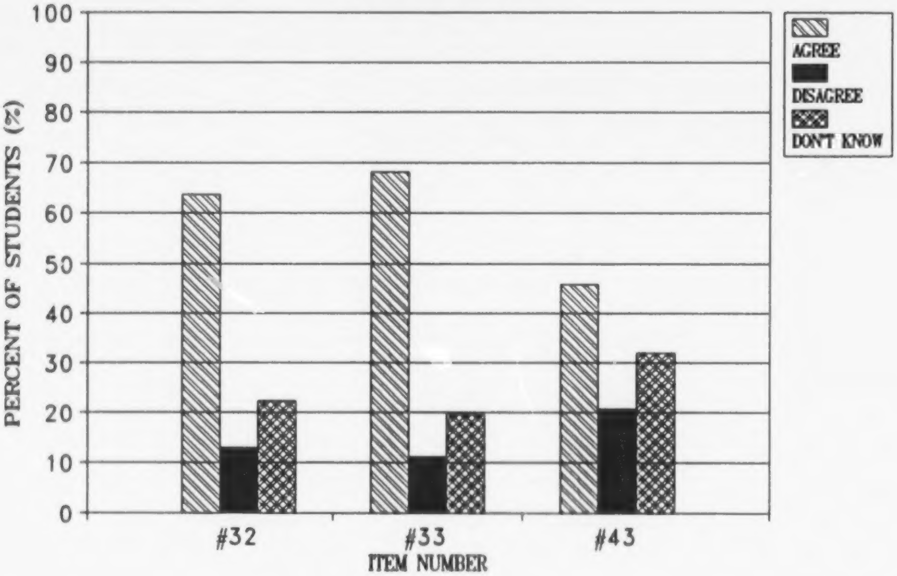
When faced with the question of whether or not it is possible to prevent wars between countries (item 38), 58% of the students agreed, 14% disagreed, and perhaps not surprisingly, 27% said that they did not know. These results suggest that while students prefer peaceful means of resolving conflict, when it comes to conflicts between countries, a sizable minority have doubts about whether it is possible to prevent fighting.

### Interdependence

Student responses to items 32, 33 and 43, which focus on different aspects of interdependence among students' own communities and communities in other parts of the world, are displayed in Figure 3.2.

**Figure 3.2**

ATTITUDES OF GRADE 4 STUDENTS TOWARD INTERDEPENDENCE



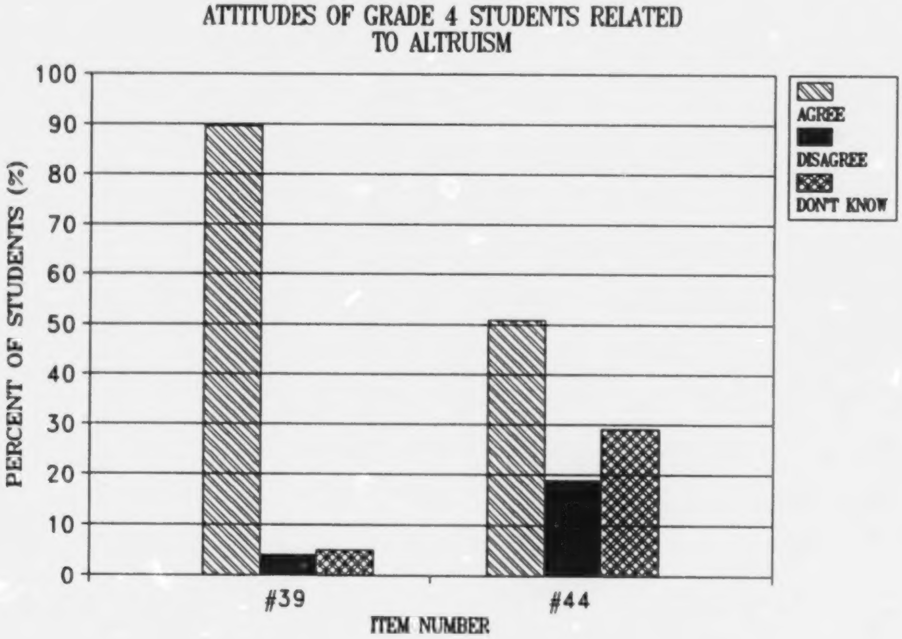
The three interdependence items deal with related but slightly different aspects of the interconnections between students' own communities and communities in other parts of the world. A majority (64%) of the students agreed (item 32) that we depend on communities in other parts of the world for things that we need, but a significant minority (34%) either disagreed or did not know. Item 33, which focused on the possibility of getting ideas from communities in other parts of the world that will help solve problems in the students' communities, produced very similar results. However, when students were asked whether events in communities in other parts of the world could change their lives (item 43), only 46% agreed while 52% either disagreed or said that they did not know.

While the answers of a majority of the students suggest that they are aware of global interconnectedness, a large minority of students appear to have little or no understanding of one of the major global education concepts contained in the grade 4 curriculum. This finding is reinforced by the findings of the observational component of the Assessment which made it apparent that most students had a very poorly developed understanding of the interconnections between major problems in other parts of the world and life in their own communities. While global interconnectedness is very likely a difficult concept to develop with young children, concrete studies of the numerous ways in which they depend on and are affected by communities in other parts of the worlds would begin to build a basis for this understanding.

## Altruism

The results from items 39 and 44, which are directed at students' views on the degree to which we should assist people in difficulty in other parts of the world, are shown in Figure 3.3 below.

Figure 3.3



When faced with the proposition that we should provide food to those who do not have enough (item 39), an overwhelming majority (90%) of the students agreed. However, when the idea of assisting others was framed in terms of, *"...giving up some of the things that we have in order to improve the way people live in other communities in other parts of the world"* (item 44), only 51% agreed and 48% either disagreed or said that they did not know.

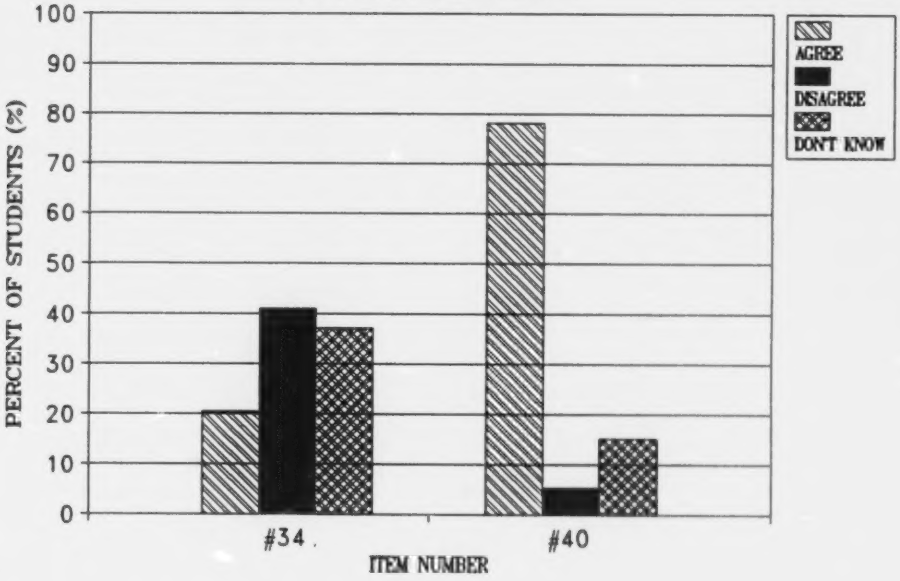
The results suggest a widespread willingness to help others who are hungry. However, a number of students change their minds or become doubtful when altruism involves the more personal notion of giving up something in order to help others. For educators who believe that altruism is an important goal, the grade 4 Social Studies curriculum provides a number of possibilities. In particular, the activities related to the curriculum's social participation objectives provide opportunities for students to take part in projects directed at assisting others.

## National Chauvinism

The results of items 34 and 40, which are directed at determining how students rate Canadians and Canada in comparison with other countries, are shown in Figure 3.4 below. Item 34 asked the students if they thought that Canadians were the best people in the world. Item 40 asked students to agree or disagree with a statement that said that Canada had faults like other countries.

Figure 3.4

ATTITUDES OF GRADE 4 STUDENTS RELATED
TO NATIONAL CHAUVINISM

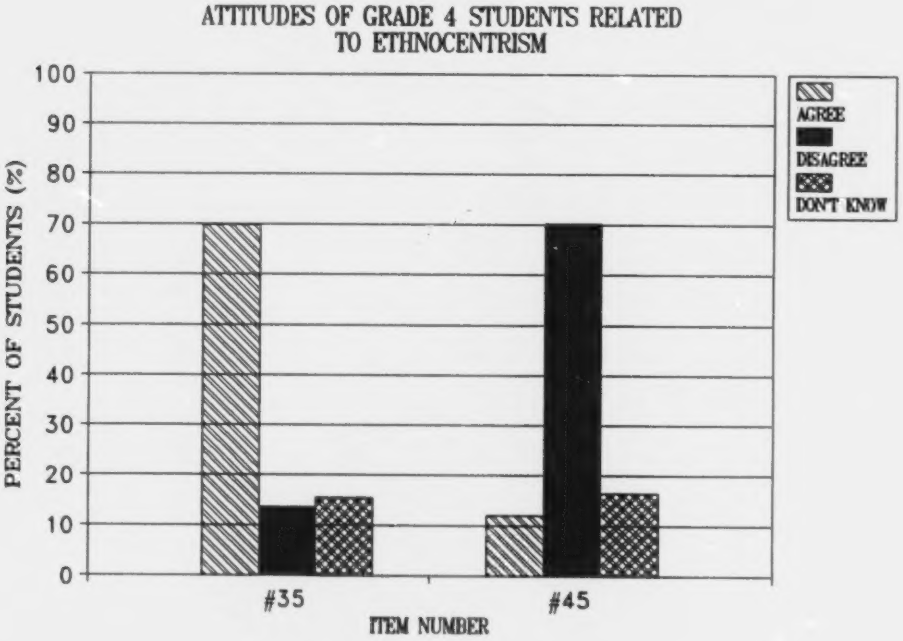


The responses to these items suggest that the large majority of the students do not see Canada and Canadians as the "best" or as faultless in comparison with other communities and people. Both items produced essentially identical results; from 70%-80% of students disagreed with the ideas that Canadians are the best people in the world and that Canada is without faults in comparison with other countries. This very Canadian response seems to be in line with the goals of a program which is directed at developing understanding and appreciation with respect to other cultures.

## Ethnocentrism

The results of items 35 and 45, which are directed at assessing students' attitudes toward personal and cultural differences, are shown in Figure 3.5 below.

**Figure 3.5**



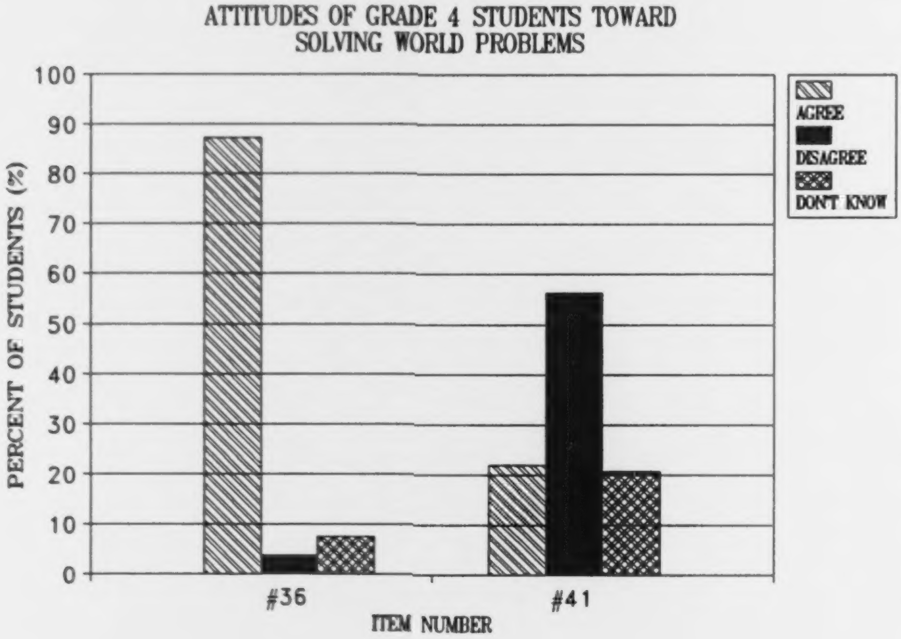
These two items, which address two different aspects of attitudes toward differences between people, produced almost identical results. Approximately 70% of the students agreed that they find it, *"interesting to be friends with someone who thinks or feels differently"* (item 35) while the same proportion indicated disagreement with the idea that, *"people from other countries should be prevented from living in Canada"* (item 45).

These fairly high expressions of interest in and tolerance for differences among people is in accord with the goals involved in the study of world communities. The results indicate, however, that approximately 30% of the students expressed intolerant views or were unsure of their views. To the extent that school experiences can affect such attitudes, concrete studies of world communities with an emphasis upon stories and other means of fostering empathy might be useful.

## Solving World Problems

The results from items 36 and 41, which address the extent to which students think that people in general and they themselves, in particular, can do something about world problems are shown in Figure 3.6.

**Figure 3.6**


ATTITUDES OF GRADE 4 STUDENTS TOWARD SOLVING WORLD PROBLEMS

The large majority of students (87%) feel that people working together can, *"...help solve some of the world's problems..."* (item 36). However, this percentage falls to 56% when they are asked about the possibility of people their own age being able to do something about world problems (item 41).

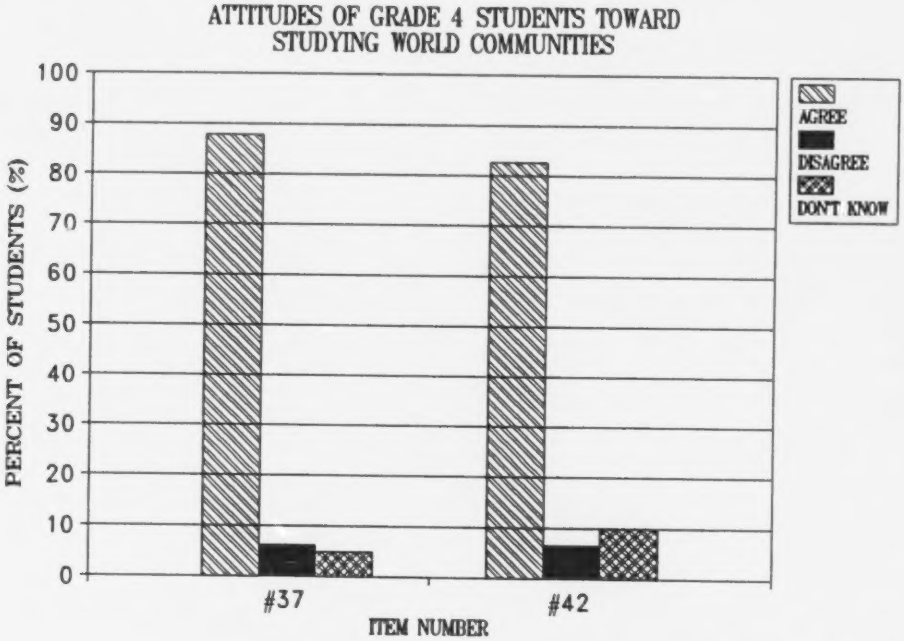
These results suggest a reasonably optimistic view with regard to the general possibility of solving world problems. Further, it can be argued that the smaller proportion of students (56%) who think that people their own age can affect world problems is really quite high given the limited power experienced by most grade 4 students in our society.

The attitudes explored in these items are part of a larger issue that is an important part of the grade 4 curriculum in particular and the Manitoba Social Studies Curriculum in general which seeks to develop in students the sense that they can,through working with others, have a significant effect on their social environment. The social participation activities in the grade 4 curriculum, which are intended to be a vehicle for encouraging a sense of social and political efficacy, may be of benefit to those students who responded negatively on these items. As well, they may provide necessary experience for those students whose positive responses express an ideal that is based on little or no concrete experience.

## Studying World Communities

The results from items 37 and 42, which are intended to assess students' interest in studying world communities as well as the degree to which they think that such study is important, are shown in Figure 3.7 below.

Figure 3.7



A large majority of students (88%) report that they find learning about other countries enjoyable (item 37). Further, a roughly similar proportion (83%) say that they think that such learning is important (item 42). The fact that these results were obtained from students toward the end of their grade 4 year suggests that their experience with the grade 4 Social Studies curriculum either generated positive attitudes or at least did nothing to dampen them.

## SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

This section of the written test was intended to assess the social participation objectives of the curriculum. As stated in the Social Studies Grade Four Curriculum Guide (1982).

> "Students might be expected to plan and carry out actions aimed at increasing awareness of practices or perceptions in another community, or they might want to try to use some indirect means to help with a problem in another community" (p.27).

Since it was not possible to have the students participate in a social action, these items were intended to explore what they say they would do in a variety of social settings and also to explore the kinds of social actions in which they had participated at school.

Item 47 had asked the students to put themselves in the place of a child who was being teased because his skin was a different colour from that of the other students. They were asked how they thought this child might feel. Seventy percent (70%) of the students thought they would feel hurt and 19% thought they would be sad. Only 4% thought they would be ashamed. These findings seem to indicate that grade 4 students are able to identify with others and their feelings.

When asked in item 48 to think about what motivated students to tease the other child, 43% said they didn't think about how the child would feel, 36% said they didn't like people who were different and 20% said they wanted to hurt the child's feelings. It could be interpreted from this data that 56% of this sample of grade 4 students believe that this type of behaviour among students is deliberate and meant to hurt a child who has a different coloured skin. Forty-three percent (43%) seem to believe that this is an unthinking act.

When asked how they would act personally if they were present when this type of incident took place (item 49), 41% said they would tell the students to stop and 40% said they would make friends with the child. Fourteen percent (14%) said they would tell the teacher. Only 1 % said they would call the child names too and 3% said they would start a fight with the students who called the child names. A total of 81% indicated that they would take positive personal action in this situation. Only 4% thought they would resolve the problem in a negative way. Fourteen percent (14%) would look to an external source (the teacher) to resolve the problem.

Item 50 asked students how they would respond to an immigrant child who did not speak English well if the child were placed in their project group. Ninety-three percent (93%) of the students responded that they would find some ways for the child to help with the project. This response seems to indicate a willingness for students to work together with others.

Item 51 had a similar focus. In this case, however, the problem was with a student who was fooling around in a group project. Thirty-eight percent (38%) of the students said they should try to help the child begin to work and 15% said they would tell the group leader. Twelve percent (12%) thought they should go on working without the child. In all, 65% of the students thought they could do something about the problem themselves. Thirty-three percent (33%) said they would go to the teacher to resolve the problem.

Item 52 presented a situation where a child threw a candy wrapper on the ground at recess and asked what her friend (Ann) should do about this. Seventy-one percent (71%) of the students said she should tell the child to pick up the wrapper. Twenty percent (20%) said they should pick it up for her. Once again the majority of the students responded in a way that suggests they feel they can do something themselves about a problem. Only 4% said they would tell the teacher. Another 3% said they would call the child a "litterbug".

Item 53 described the students' school playground as covered with litter and asked who should clean it up. Forty-seven percent (47%) of students thought that the students themselves should clean it up. Forty-three percent (43%) thought it was the responsibility of all of the people in the school (teachers, caretakers, students and community workers). A very small percentage of students thought it was the responsibility of another group to clean up the litter. Once again the grade 4 students seem to believe they have a role to play in solving problems.

Item 54 asked students how to resolve a problem requiring assistance to a community lacking food. Fifty-four percent (54%) saw that taking a vote was the way to resolve the problem. Twenty-four percent (24%) thought that a group of students should study the problem and decide what to do. Fifteen percent (15%) thought they should ask the teachers to decide. Six percent (6%) thought they should flip a coin to decide. In total, 78% of the students thought that students should be actively involved in the decision-making process. Only 15% turned the responsibility over to the teacher.

The responses to the six items discussed above indicate that the students see themselves as being responsible and involved in the resolution of problems. This is, of course, only what they say they should or would do. This type of written test cannot reveal whether this is the way they act in real situations. However, students certainly won't ever act this way if they have never thought this way. Overall, these responses seem to be very positive and were judged to be very satisfactory by the TAC.

Items 55-62 were designed to examine students' social participation both within and beyond the confines of the school. Students were asked to respond affirmatively or negatively to their involvement in selected activities related to helping or informing others, in their own, or in other communities. Over 60% of the students (60% to 87%) had collected money for UNICEF, collected money or goods to help people, helped make immigrant students feel welcome, helped clean up their school ground and/or community, and shared what they had learned about world communities with other classes. Fewer students had written letters to newspapers about a community problem (24%), made displays to help people think about needs in world communities (38%), or taken part in a special day to celebrate world communities they had studied (49%). The above rates of participation were considered to be appropriate for the grade 4 level and were judged to be very satisfactory by the TAC.

## OBSERVATIONS AND DISCUSSION

For the most part grade 4 students seem to be developing satisfactory concepts and generalizations about the world; appear to be learning some interesting facts about the way people live; and seem to be able to recognize similarities and differences between themselves and others living in different parts of the world. However, given that teachers report spending so much time studying the globe, world maps, and landforms, it is surprising that students did not demonstrate greater mastery of these objectives.

Grade 4 students are able to understand the impact of the environment on a community, recognize how community needs and wants are satisfied, and are able to make judgements on the impact of environmental changes. However, children's definitions of community tended to focus on material dimensions and were quite limited in scope. Their general knowledge about Canada was judged to be quite satisfactory.

From the information available on this part of the Assessment, it is apparent that students commonly identified countries when asked to name a community they had studied. If this was as a result of teacher choice, as is likely the case, this would then mean that teachers are not following the community orientation suggested in the curriculum. This seems to be borne out in other parts of the report describing data from the Teacher Survey and Teacher Interviews.

Overall, it can be stated that the objectives assessed by the items constituting the thinking and research skills portion of the Assessment have been met to the satisfaction of the TAC. Students generally received satisfactory ratings on the mapping objectives with some weaknesses evident in the use of a scale, a legend, and a global grid. Students were also able to locate information adequately by selecting the best sources for finding information, identifying given topics in an encyclopedia, using an index and a table of contents, and by correctly interpreting charts, bar graphs, and pictures. On the items which required the identification of a main idea, the results were less satisfactory. An analysis of the students' responses to items which asked students to provide reasons for their opinions makes it difficult to interpret whether or not students are able to provide satisfactory reasons for their choices.

In so far as the components of this subtest were able to tap students' attitudes and values as they relate to the curriculum's objectives, it can be stated that these objectives have been met. Students were able to understand and make judgements related to the quality of life in the communities they had studied. Their perception on the similarity of human needs across cultures varied somewhat depending on the degree of cultural differences between their own and the other world culture studied. To a certain extent their perception of needs and wants and the various ways of meeting them across cultures were clouded by cultural differences.

Students also seem to demonstrate a tolerant attitude towards other cultures and seem to be aware of global interconnectedness. They seem to prefer resolving conflicts by talking rather than by fighting, whether it be on a personal or on a global level, but, understandably, do not feel empowered to assist in solving world problems. Depending on the degree of personal sacrifice, grade 4 students are prepared to share our wealth with less fortunate people in the world, are not chauvinistic about Canada, and are prepared to befriend someone from another culture or country. The large majority of students enjoy studying world communities and feel that such learning is important.

Although it is obviously not possible to set any standard for the attitudes and values of grade 4 students, certain changes could be brought about to modify these in the direction outlined in the curriculum. Activities related to the social participation objectives might, for example, empower grade 4 students to feel that they can make an impact on solving what can otherwise be considered "adult" problems in world communities. Such activities may help students see beyond the stereotypical differences commonly associated with the generally accepted view of other cultures and appreciate the interdependence of the communities of the world.

It is evident that there is a relationship between the attitudes and values and the social participation objectives of the grade 4 curriculum. In the Assessment, the stated social actions of the students can be used as a litmus test for their attitudes and values. To the extent that this is true, there seems to be congruence between these two sets of objectives. Students seem to understand the feelings of racially different and immigrant children and are willing to assist in eliminating discrimination and to facilitate the integration of such children into their group.

Grade 4 students indicate by their responses to the various scenarios proposed in this subtest, that they have a responsibility to respond themselves in various social situations. They are prepared, for example, to do something themselves to encourage a recalcitrant classmate to participate in their group project, to take action to clean up litter in their own school ground, or to see that a friend or classmate who litters picks up after themselves. When it comes to decision-making in a group of their peers, they see themselves as taking an active part, or the group taking a more active part than the teacher.

In reviewing the rates of participation in social actions related to school based on school-sponsored activities, students reported a very high rate of participation. In light of the difficulties identified by teachers in teaching to the social participation objectives of the curriculum, the data from this section of the grade 4 test are very encouraging. This could mean that teachers are overly concerned about this section of the curriculum. Providing them with examples (such as those implied in the present Assessment) of how students can achieve these objectives would no doubt allay many apprehensions in this area.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on the grade 4 written test.

1. The Grades 3 and 4 curriculum guides should be revised to highlight the concept of community and to make clear the attributes of the concept for teachers and learners.

2. Teachers' attention should be drawn to the importance of the small scale community focus of the curriculum and they should be encouraged to implement this approach in their teaching of the grade 4 program.

3. The curriculum guide should be revised so that the mapping skills required at the grade 4 level are made more specific and suited to the abilities of grade 4 students.

4. Teachers should be encouraged to use real world experiences to teach a variety of mapping skills to their students.

5. Teachers should concentrate their efforts on teaching students to learn to use simple grid systems as opposed to the more abstract concepts of latitude and longitude. Latitude and longitude should be optional topics for this age level.

6. Teachers should use mapping exercises which encourage their students to read and interpret the legends and use that information for higher level thinking skills such as comparing, contrasting and making inferences.

7. The curriculum guide should be reviewed and modified to indicate expectations regarding grade 4 students' use of scale and to ensure that strategies necessary to teach and assess simple map scales are appropriate for them.

8. Teachers should provide students with activities which encourage children to use higher order thinking skills such as identifying the main idea and using evidence to identify relationships.

9. Teachers should provide students with learning experiences which promote empathy and the ability to imagine alternative perspectives.

10. Manitoba Education and Training, faculties of education, and curriculum consultants should assist teachers in the implementation of attitudes and values and social participation objectives into the teaching of the grade 4 program.

11. Teachers should be encouraged to use classroom activities fostering empathy towards others, favouring social participation directed at assisting others and avoiding stereotypical attitudes towards the quality of life in different communities.

12. The curriculum guide should be revised to provide teachers with clear guidelines and examples for teaching and evaluating attitudes and values objectives.

# CHAPTER 4

# Grade Four Teacher Survey

The survey was sent to a stratified random sample that consisted of 300 teachers or 44% of the 682 grade 4 teachers that were in Manitoba classrooms in the 1989/90 school year. Of the 300 teachers in the sample, 254 or 85% completed and returned the survey.

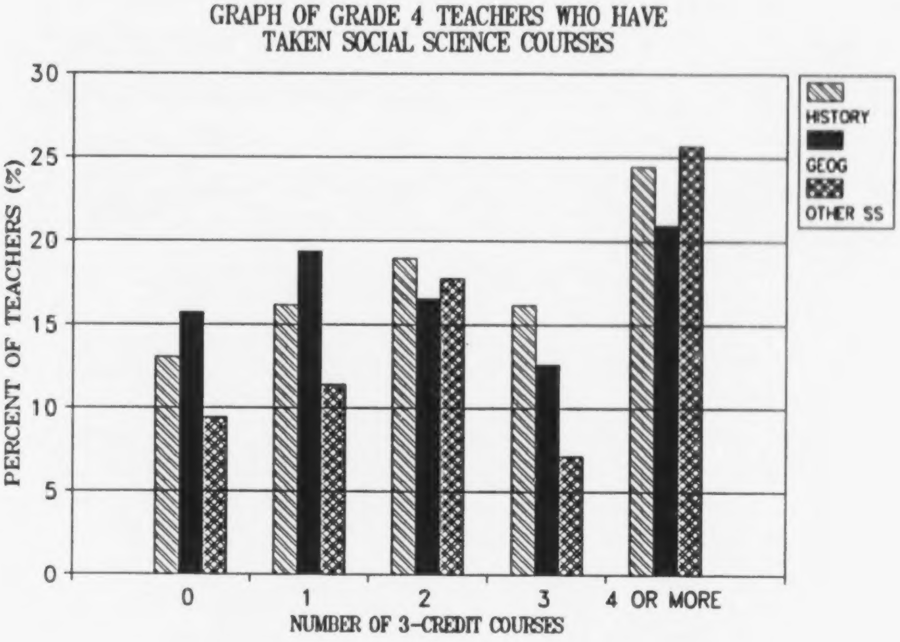
The analysis of the survey was conducted on nine sections in the questionnaire broken down under the following topics: teacher background, school organization, views of social studies, curriculum guide, selection of unit topics, teaching resources, teaching strategies, evaluation, professional development in social studies, and is reported accordingly in this chapter. The survey questionnaire is reproduced in Appendix A.

## SURVEY RESULTS

### TEACHER BACKGROUND

Teachers were asked to report the number of post-secondary academic or professional courses they had taken in history, geography, and the social sciences. The intent of this question was to find the extent to which grade 4 teachers had taken courses with direct relevance to the teaching of Social Studies. Figure 4.1 below indicates the teacher responses to this question.

Figure 4.1



GRAPH OF GRADE 4 TEACHERS WHO HAVE TAKEN SOCIAL SCIENCE COURSES

The responses indicate that most grade 4 teachers have taken at least some courses related to the social studies. They also suggest, however, that quite a large proportion may have taken a minimal number of such courses; only 24% of teachers report having 4 or more 3-credit courses in History and only 21% of teachers report having 4 or more 3-credit courses in Geography. While these data probably reflect demands arising from the generalist nature of elementary teaching, they also point to important gaps, both pre-and post-professional, in the education of some elementary teachers.

## SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

The questions in this section were intended to provide information on the amount of class time that grade 4 teachers use for Social Studies. The questions and the percentage of teachers responding to each category follow:

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Other (specify) | No Response |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A. How many days are in one cycle of your timetable? | - | .8% | - | 2.8% | 15.0% | 77.6% | 2.0% | 2.0% |

| | Less than 61 | 61-90 | 91-120 | 121-150 | 151-180 | Over 180 | No Response |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| B. How many minutes per cycle (per class) do you teach Social Studies? | 4.3% | 8.3% | 27.2% | 20.1% | 27.2% | 9.1% | 3.9% |

Manitoba Education and Training prescribes that 30 minutes per day (150 minutes per five-day cycle or 180 minutes per six-day cycle) be allotted to teaching Social Studies in grade 4. Thirty-six percent (36%) of the teachers reported spending 150 or more minutes per cycle on Social Studies, and, of these, 9% reported that they spent 180 minutes or more. Given that most teachers in the sample indicated that they work within a six day cycle, it appears that a majority of them do not meet the prescribed allotment of 30 minutes per day.

While these findings are probably a fair snapshot of the class time teachers devote to Social Studies, they should be read with the understanding that providing an accurate time estimate may have been problematic for teachers who integrate Social Studies into other subjects, either through the use of whole language or other methodologies.

## TEACHER VIEWS OF SOCIAL STUDIES

This section of the teacher questionnaire was designed to provide information about grade 4 teachers' views on the teaching of Social Studies. Teachers were asked to rate six goal statements which were not mutually exclusive and, judging by the level of support accorded most of the statements, many teachers indicated some level of agreement with more than one choice. The goal statements and related ratings in percentages of teacher responses are as follows.

VIEWS OF SOCIAL STUDIES

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | No Response |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A. The main task of Social Studies is to preserve and transmit cultural heritage | 9.4% | 54.7% | 16.9% | 15.4% | .4% | 3.1% |
| B. Social Studies should teach students to make rational decisions about personal and social issues | 18.9 | 69.3 | 6.7 | 1.6 | - | 3.5 |
| C. Social Studies should provide learners both with an awareness of possible futures and the roles they might play in developing these futures | 22.4 | 63.8 | 7.9 | 2.0 | - | 3.9 |
| D. Social Studies should provide students with the skills necessary to become independent learners | 27.6 | 61.4 | 5.9 | 2.4 | - | 2.8 |
| E. Social Studies should teach a body of tested principles and generalizations about human relations and societies | 7.5 | 51.6 | 23.6 | 11.4 | .4 | 5.5 |
| F. Social Studies should help students understand the structure of the social sciences | 5.1 | 52.8 | 27.2 | 10.6 | .4 | 3.9 |

One way to examine these results is to compare the statements of purpose with respect to the total percentage of teachers who indicated either strong agreement or agreement in each case. From this perspective, three goal statements stood out as being most clearly in accord with teacher views; Social Studies for teaching skills (option D, 89%), Social Studies as decision making (option B, 88%), and Social Studies as preparation for the future (option C, 86%). The more traditional view of Social Studies as a vehicle for developing knowledge of one's cultural heritage received noticeably less support (option A, 64%). The two views of Social Studies that were related to the social sciences also received relatively low levels of support (option E, 59%; option F, 58%).

Broadly put, these results suggest that grade 4 teachers tend to see the Social Studies in terms of their usefulness for teaching skills. Those goals having to do with knowledge, whether related to cultural heritage or arising from the social sciences, received relatively lower levels of support.

## USE AND RATING OF THE CURRICULUM GUIDE

The items in this section of the survey were directed at various aspects of the grade 4 Social Studies curriculum guide and its implementation. The first three were directed at determining whether or not teachers use the 1982 Social Studies Curriculum Guide and the extent to which they participated in inservice sessions related to the teaching of Social Studies. The item is reproduced below.

CURRICULUM GUIDE

| | | Yes | No | Not Sure | No Response |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A. | Are you using the 1982 Social Studies Curriculum Guide? | 87.8% | 5.5% | - | 6.7% |
| B. | Have you attended inservice sessions on the grade 4 curriculum? | 44.5 | 50.8 | .4 | 4.3 |
| C. | Were Social Studies curriculum inservices available to you which you did not attend? | 22.4 | 42.9 | 26.0 | 8.7 |

A very high proportion of teachers (88%) reported that they use the curriculum guide while approximately 12% either did not respond or indicated that they did not use it (item A). While most of the 68 written comments relating to this item focused on:
problems encountered in using the curriculum, (e.g., *"not enough time, some skills are too difficult, skill development progression not clearly identified, guide too general and poorly organized, activities not exciting and relevant, social problems not appropriate for grade 4 students, assistance needed in adapting curriculum to suit special education students and ESL students"*), some comments also indicated that the curriculum is clearly written and easy to use.

Just over half of the teachers (51%) said that they had not attended any inservice sessions related to the grade 4 Social Studies curriculum. In addition, 43% indicated that there had been no such inservices of which they were aware and had chosen not to attend. Responses to these items could indicate that teachers regard their low level of involvement in inservices as arising from limited opportunities to do so.

Of the 47 written comments relating to inservice, the large majority dealt with dissatisfaction and problems of access. Some, however, did indicate satisfaction and areas of interest.

Comments made on problems related to Social Studies inservices dealt with the lack of inservices available, limited release time, limits placed on the number of staff chosen to attend inservices, the fact that Social Studies inservices were scheduled at the same time as inservices on other subjects, and the fact one inservice dealt with assessment rather than the teaching of Social Studies.

Teachers who commented positively on Social Studies inservices stated they had no difficulty in finding appropriate inservice opportunities, that most inservices were good, and that SAG inservices were useful. Teacher comments expressing interests for future inservices centred around teaching the four main objectives and approaches to studying world communities.

Given the wide ranging nature of the professional development needs facing elementary teachers and the costs and planning involved in providing appropriate professional development, the negative dimension of these results is not surprising. It does, however, point to a real problem in the overall implementation of the Social Studies program. There appears to be an important need both for more Social Studies inservices and for more opportunities for teachers to attend such inservices. This conclusion is reinforced by the results in the professional development section of this survey, in which the teachers in the sample reported a low level of involvement in any type of recent Social Studies inservice activity and then went on to identify a large number of widely ranging inservice needs.

The next sub-section of the survey dealing with the curriculum guide asked teachers to indicate their level of satisfaction with 11 different aspects of the guide and to provide an overall rating. The percentage response rates to each point are presented below.

Rate the 1982 Social Studies curriculum guide on:

| | | Very Satisfactory | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | No Opinion | No Response |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Social Studies K-12 Guide Overview? | 9.1% | 68.1% | 4.3% | 9.4% | 9.1% |
| 2. | Grade Four Overview? | 11.0 | 72.8 | 5.9 | 3.5 | 6.7 |
| 3. | Unit Overview? | 9.8 | 69.7 | 9.4 | 2.4 | 8.7 |
| 4. | Topics and Focusing Questions? | 9.1 | 67.7 | 9.8 | 3.5 | 9.8 |
| 5. | Knowledge Objectives? | 9.4 | 73.2 | 4.3 | 3.9 | 9.1 |
| 6. | Thinking and Research Skills Objectives? | 9.1 | 70.9 | 7.1 | 3.9 | 9.1 |
| 7. | Attitude & Value Objectives? | 7.9 | 68.9 | 8.7 | 5.1 | 9.4 |
| 8. | Social Participation Objectives? | 7.1 | 64.2 | 11.4 | 6.7 | 10.6 |
| 9. | Suggested Teaching Strategies and Learning Activities? | 11.8 | 54.3 | 19.3 | 4.3 | 10.2 |
| 10. | Suggested Learning Resources | 7.5 | 54.7 | 21.7 | 6.7 | 9.4 |
| 11. | Suggested Strategies for Evaluation of Students? | 5.1 | 51.2 | 25.2 | 7.9 | 10.6 |
| 12. | How would you rate the grade 8 Curriculum Guide overall? | 7.5 | 66.1 | 12.2 | 3.5 | 10.6 |

With respect to the guide as a whole (item 12), 7.5% of the respondents indicated that they found it to be very satisfactory, 66% said that it was satisfactory, and 12% said that it was unsatisfactory. For the most part, when teachers were asked to rate particular aspects of the guide, they provided similar ratings. However, three important aspects of the guide received noticeably lower ratings; teaching strategies and learning activities (19% unsatisfactory), learning resources (22% unsatisfactory), and evaluation strategies (25% unsatisfactory).

Although comments were not sought at this point in the survey, ten teachers provided written elaborations for their ratings. While there is no evidence that these comments are representative, they may provide insight into sources of dissatisfaction with the curriculum. Of the 11 points that were made, seven focused on the curriculum guide. Four of these indicated that the guide is difficult to understand while the remaining four stated that it is lacking in information and guidance. The rest of the comments were related to problems in identifying and obtaining appropriate resource materials.

In summary, the teachers' ratings suggest a reasonable level of satisfaction with the grade 4 Social Studies guide. However, they also indicate that a significant number of teachers would like to see improvements in specific aspects of the guide, particularly with respect to teaching strategies and learning activities, learning resources, and evaluation strategies. This latter conclusion is strongly reinforced by the general sense of the comments that teachers provided in the parts of the survey dealing with teachers' views on Social Studies, teaching strategies, and professional development.

## SELECTION OF UNIT TOPICS

All of the items in this section of the survey deal with decisions that face teachers as they use the grade 4 Social Studies Curriculum. The items are directed at determining what choices teachers make, why they make them, and some of the strategies found useful for implementing their choices. Specifically, information was sought on the orientation used to teach the program, students' role in selecting parts of the course of studies, the importance of World issues and World events in the teachers' program, the placement of the teaching of mapping and thinking and research skills in the program, the importance accorded to dealing with bias and stereotyping, and the development of empathy and responsibility for people in other parts of the world.

### Community Versus Country

Prior to 1982, the Manitoba Social Studies Curriculum suggested that global education at the elementary level be carried out through the study of countries selected on the basis of cultural and environmental diversity. The current curriculum uses similar criteria but indicates that such study should focus primarily on specific communities rather than countries. The following item was intended to find out the extent to which teachers had implemented a community study approach.

**The grade 4 curriculum emphasizes the study of world communities.**

**1. Do you teach the curriculum primarily as (answer one only)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| a) | a study of specific communities? | OR | 10.6% |
| b) | a study of countries | OR | 26.8 |
| c) | both a) and b) | | 55.9 |
| d) | no response | | 6.7 |

The responses to this item suggest that a relatively small proportion of teachers (11%) have fully adopted the curriculum's community focus, while a majority (56%) take an approach that involves the study of both countries and communities. However, more than a quarter (27%) of those surveyed indicated that they engage students exclusive-ly in the study of countries. These results indicate that a significant number of teachers have either not begun or have not completed implementing the Curriculum's community studies focus.

### Selection of Communities and/or Countries

This part of the survey was directed at determining both the bases on which teachers choose particular communities or countries as topics of study and the actual communities and countries that they selected.

With respect to the particular communities and countries that are selected for study, the grade 4 Social Studies curriculum guide recommends that they be representative of both different regions in the world and some of the variety that exists within those regions, and that they be representative of cultural and environmental diversity. While the survey data does not reveal individual teacher patterns of community selection, it provides a picture of the global distribution of communities being studied in Manitoba's grade 4 classrooms. Table 4.1 below categorizes the 902 citings into a number of regions/countries.

Table 4.1

Global Distribution of Communities/Countries Studied in Grade 4 Social Studies N=254

| Region/Country | Frequency* of Citings | Percent of Total Citings |
|---|---|---|
| Canada | 248 | 27% |
| Asia | 148 | 16 |
| Australia | 136 | 15 |
| Europe | 126 | 14 |
| Africa | 99 | 11 |
| Mexico | 51 | 6 |
| South America | 42 | 5 |
| Middle East | 28 | 3 |
| West Indies | 11 | 1 |
| U.S.S.R. | 8 | 1 |
| Other | 7 | 1 |
| Total | 902 | 100% |

* In 103 instances selections were reported in terms of types of communities (e.g., rainforest community, mountain community, etc.). These selections were not included in the above tabulations. If they had all been included as communities outside of Canada, the proportion of Canadian communities would have been reduced to 25%.

The most startling piece of information in this summarization is that approximately 27% of the community/country studies reported by teachers focus on communities, provinces or regions in Canada. This is higher than the proportion of selections in any other part of the world. Given that the intent of the grade 4 Social Studies curriculum is to have students study communities in parts of the world other than Canada, this may indicate that a sizable number of teachers are misunderstanding or ignoring the intent of the grade 4 curriculum guide. There are, however, at least three other factors that may be contributing to this high percentage. Some proportion of the Canadian selections may arise from classrooms containing both grades 4 and 5 in which the grade 5 curriculum, which focuses on Canada, can be alternated on a yearly basis with the grade 4 curriculum. In addition, some teachers may be deciding to have their students study a Canadian community prior to studying communities in other parts of the world, either because they think that their study of communities in grade three was in some way inadequate or because they are

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convinced that Social Studies should not deviate from an orderly expanding horizons progression. Finally, at least two widely used basal reading series have units on Canada at the grade 4 level. Some teachers may be substituting these units for the grade 4 Social Studies program. Whatever the cause, this high proportion of Canada-based selections is an issue that requires further investigation and one that points to a need for professional development activities directed both at familiarizing teachers with the substantial evidence in support of having students study world communities in the upper Early Years and at assisting them in carrying out such studies.

The rest of Table 4.1 suggests a fairly wide-ranging distribution of community/country studies. Thus it seems that the program's cultural and environmental diversity criteria that were described above are being met when the data are considered on a province-wide basis. As was mentioned above, these data do not indicate the extent to which these criteria are being met in particular classrooms. The low rate of selection for some regions of the world is likely influenced by the availability of appropriate resources or teacher awareness of such resources.

The remaining point to be made about community selections arises from the 103 instances in which teachers reported their choices according to the type of community being studied. These selections were as follows:

Rainforest community (25)
Northern community (12)
Rural community (7)
City community (7)
Hutterite community (4)
Ranching community (1)

Desert community (22)
Mountain community (9)
Farming community (7)
Grasslands community (5)
Fishing community (3)
Pioneer community (1)

These sorts of generic community studies may be a reasonable way to approach the Social Studies guide's community focus when faced with a shortage of material and information on a specific community. This approach is supported by some textbooks which take a generic approach in combination with illustrative material from particular communities. There is also a possibility, however, that some of these generic selections were reported by teachers who still use the approach that was recommended in the Province's two prior Social Studies curricula where the selection of countries for study based on the criteria of including a mountain country, an island country and so on.

The survey also asked teachers to select, from eight proposed reasons, those which had influenced their decisions to select either communities or countries for study. The rate of selection for each reason, expressed as a total and as a percentage of all respondents, is detailed in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2

Reasons for Selecting Communities/Countries for Study

N = 254

| Reasons Cited | Number of Times Cited | As a % of Teachers Surveyed |
|---|---|---|
| There are many good teaching resources available for the communities or countries selected. | 144 | 57% |
| They represent a variety of physical areas around the world | 134 | 53 |
| They are generated from student interest | 130 | 51 |
| They are in the text in use | 100 | 39 |
| The teacher has personal experience with the communities or countries | 97 | 38 |
| They illustrate key global issues such as hunger, pollution, etc. | 93 | 37 |
| They are currently in the news | 78 | 30 |
| They are the communities or countries from which the students or their families came to Canada | 63 | 24 |

Teachers were given an opportunity to indicate other factors that influenced their selections of communities or countries. While these factors were cited at most six times and usually only once, some of them may have received higher frequencies had they been included in the list of reasons presented to teachers. For example, the first factor listed below, which deals with opportunities for cultural contrast and comparison, might likely have been mentioned at least as frequently as the factor dealing with representation of a variety of physical areas. Factors cited included the following:

" - *the possibilities that a community/country presents for comparing and/or contrasting cultures" (cited 6 times)*

" - *students' need for more knowledge of their own community/country prior to studying communities/countries in other parts of the world" (cited 5 times)*

" - *the availability of people with special knowledge about a community/country" (cited 4 times)*

Other factors, which were mentioned only once, included: the opportunity to 'twin' with a classroom and exchange information; class involvement in supporting a child in another part of the world; the needs of special students; rotating curricula to accommodate a split grade; teacher interest; and the usefulness of material from a correspondence course.

It is difficult to identify any dominant theme arising from teachers' reasons for selecting communities or countries for study. These results do suggest, however, that resources broadly considered, whether in the form of teachers' own experiences and materials, other people's experiences, texts, or other teaching resources, are a primary consideration.

In summary, these data on selection of unit topics point to at least two implementation problems. First, many teachers appear not to have adopted the curriculum's community focus. Second, in a relatively high proportion of instances, students are studying Canadian communities rather than communities in other parts of the world. Given that the grade 4 program is intended to establish the foundation for students' global education and that it represents one of the few segments of students' schooling that is intended to focus primarily on global education, these problems point to the need for increased implementation efforts.

## Opportunities for Student Choice

The item which is reproduced below was intended to determine the extent to which teachers let students select topics for individual or small-group study.

**Did your students have an opportunity to select communities of interest to them for individual or small-group study?**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| YES . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | 51.6% | If yes, how many? _____ |
| NO . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | 40.6 | |
| NO RESPONSE . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | 7.9 | |

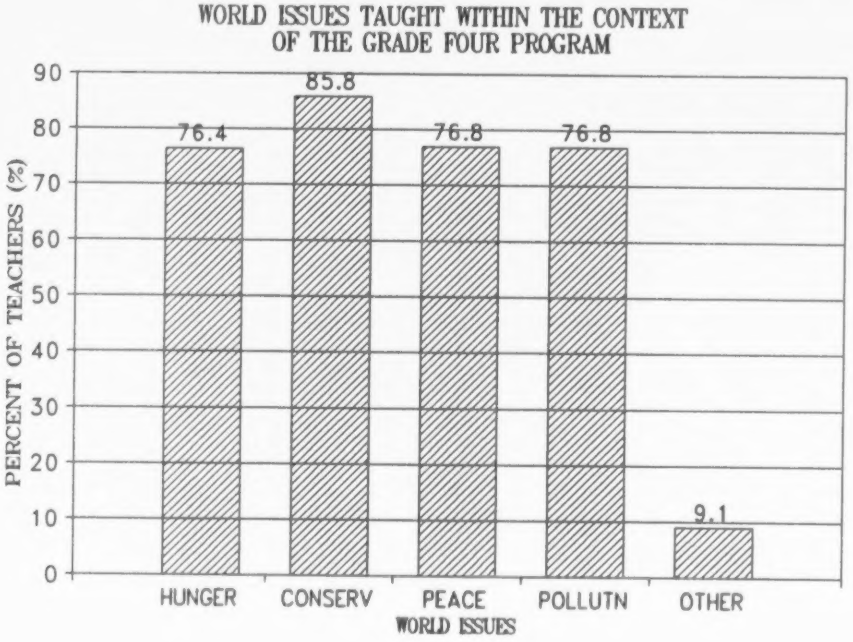
More than half of the teachers (52%) in the sample responded affirmatively. Of these, 25% (63 teachers) reported providing one such opportunity, 10% (26 teachers) reported providing two such opportunities, and another 5% (13 teachers) reported that they allowed students to choose anywhere from three to 15 times. However, 48% (121 teachers) of those who responded affirmatively did not indicate how frequently they provided students with an opportunity to choose, while another 12% (31 teachers) followed their affirmative response with a contradictory rate of zero.

While the data regarding frequency of opportunity to choose topics for individual or group study are problematic, it seems evident that a considerable number of teachers do provide for some level of choice by students. Clearly, providing for student interests is important and choices of the sort indicated in this item are one way to make such provisions. However, letting students choose topics for individual or group study can be problematic with respect to the community studies focus of the grade 4 Social Studies program. If locating resources appropriate to this focus is as important and difficult as the responses provided by teachers appear to indicate, then providing such resources to accommodate a range of student choices must be even more of a challenge. If this is true, one side effect of student choice could be increased reliance on resources that result in country rather than community studies.

## World Problems

The item designed to elicit teachers' views on world issues and problems within the context of the grade 4 program asked teachers to rate world hunger, conservation, world peace, and pollution as appropriate topics to be studied. Teacher responses are specified in Figure 4.2 below.

**Figure 4.2**



Depending on the particular issue, between 76% and 86% of the teachers sampled think it is appropriate to include the sorts of issues indicated above as topics for the grade 4 Social Studies program. A small number of teachers wrote in additional issues and one teacher, while supporting the general idea of including world problems, noted that the program was already difficult to fit into the time available. In summary, it seems fair to say that there is strong support for the inclusion of world problems in the grade 4 program.

## Current Events

When asked whether or not they used current events as a part of their Social Studies program, a large majority (78%) of teachers answered affirmatively, 15% answered negatively, and 6% gave no response. Those who responded affirmatively provided 299 specific examples categorized in Table 4.3 below.

## Table 4.3

Current Events Identified by Teachers for Use with the Grade 4 Social Studies Program

| Teachers' Examples | Number of Times Cited | As a % of Total Citings |
|---|---|---|
| Current world events (no specific example provided) | 97 | 32 |
| Natural and man-made disasters | 58 | 19 |
| Olympics (Summer, Winter, Special) | 49 | 16 |
| Events selected on the basis of interest and concern to students and relationship to topic at the time of study | 48 | 16 |
| Political, historical, economic issues | 20 | 7 |
| Environmental events/issues | 11 | 4 |
| Other (eg. scientific discoveries, World Fair in Australia, Pandas) | 16 | 5 |
| Total | 299 | |

The data arising from this item suggest that the use of current events in the grade 4 Social Studies program is both wide-spread and varied.

### Teaching Map and Research Skills

Two questions in this subtest addressed a persistent issue in the organization of the grade 4 Social Studies curriculum concerning whether map and research skills should be taught in the context of the world community units in which they are to be applied or in separate lessons or units prior to the community studies. Teachers' views are shown in Table 4.4 below.

## Table 4.4

Teachers' Preferred Sequencing for Teaching Map and Research Skills

| Preferred Sequence | Map Skills N = 254 | Research Skills N = 254 |
|---|---|---|
| Prior to Community Studies | | |
| In a unit at the beginning of the year (map skills) | 16.9% | |
| Prior to the unit (research skills) | | 6.7% |
| In the Context of Community Studies | | |
| Throughout the year (map skills) | 15.0 | |
| During the unit as they are needed (research skills) | | 38.2 |
| Both Prior to and in Context | | |
| (map skills) | 61.4 | |
| (research skills) | | 52.0 |
| No Response | | |
| (map Skills) | 6.7 | |
| (research skills) | | 3.1 |
| Totals | 100% | 100% |

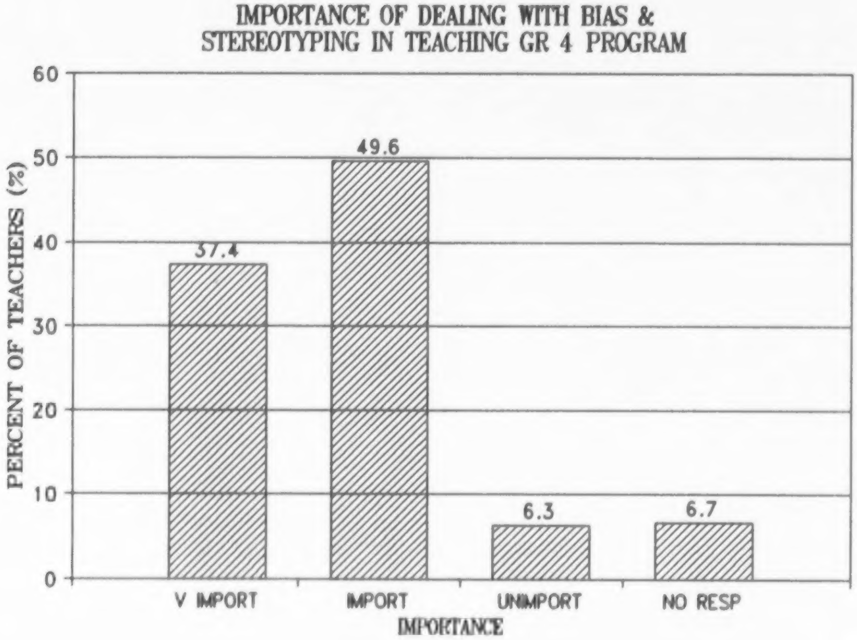
The majority of respondents indicated a preference for a combination of prior and in-context teaching with respect to both map (61%) and research skills (52%), with the support for this combined approach being approximately 10% higher when map skills were under consideration. However, among those who chose only the prior or only the in-context approach, their choices were influenced by the category of skill under consideration. That is, an in-context approach appears to be seen as more appropriate for research skills than it is for map skills, with the former receiving the approval of two and a half times as many teachers as the latter. Similarly, the proportion of teachers who chose prior teaching was approximately two and a half times greater in the case of map skills than it was for research skills.

Seen from a different perspective, the above data indicate, in the case of map skills, that 78% of the respondents prefer to do some or all out-of-context teaching, while the corresponding proportion for research skills is 59%. One question raised by these findings is the extent to which this level of out-of-context teaching results in students learning skills in situations where they are unable to make meaningful applications. While the survey data say little about this matter, the teacher interviews, which were a part of the observational component of the Assessment, indicate that at least a third of the thirty teachers interviewed spent much of the fall term on map skills. This raises the possibility that considerable skill learning may be taking place in circumstances in which students have little opportunity to make immediate applications in community studies. To the extent that this is a problem, altering the curriculum guide by providing clear examples of in-context approaches to the teaching of both map and research skills may be useful.

## Bias and Stereotyping

When asked how important it was that bias and stereotyping be dealt with in teaching the grade 4 program, 37% of the teachers in the sample said that it was very important, 50% said it was important, 6% said it was unimportant, and 7% did not respond. (See Figure 4.3) In other words, a large majority (87%) of the respondents think that it is either very important or important to deal with bias and stereotyping in the context of the grade 4 Social Studies.

**Figure 4.3**



The teachers' responses to the request that they share the most effective means they had found for dealing with bias and stereotyping are summarized in Table 4.5 below.

### Table 4.5

N = 221

Teachers' Approaches for Dealing with Bias and Stereotyping

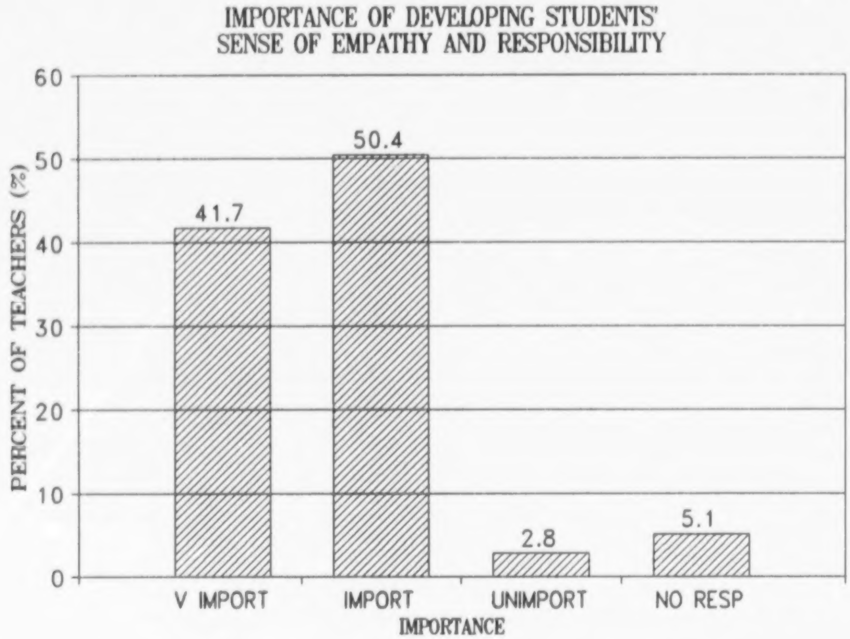
| Approaches | Frequency |
|---|---|
| Deal with bias and stereotyping in an open and straightforward manner<br>Examples: use real examples from student behaviour; have students share experiences in small groups and with class; use role playing; explore reasons for biases; define stereotyping and use reason and logic to show that it is unwarranted; emphasize that jobs are to be done by all and are not determined by sex; emphasize that there is no right way to live; use students' experiences when discussing issues; help students empathize with other people. | 89 |
| Use various resources<br>Examples: use films, plays, guest speakers, field trips, news articles | 49 |
| Focus on similarities rather than differences<br>Examples: explore similarities among students' own feeling and feelings of people in other places and times; emphasize underlying similarities rather than differences among people, traditions, etc. | 32 |
| Focus on multiculturalism, customs, traditions | 6 |
| Deal with bias and stereotyping through other subjects<br>Examples: themes such as friendship, differences, and culture in Language Arts; native literature; stories about famous people from other cultures/races. | 4 |
| Teacher using self and own experiences | 1 |
| Various other suggestions<br>Example: avoid personal commentary and opinions. | 9 |
| Do not emphasize bias and stereotyping | 5 |
| Not necessary to emphasize bias and stereotyping<br>Examples: some stereotyping has a cultural basis in students and it will not change; some value judgments are necessitated by community variations; difficult because students very self-centred at this stage; few grade 4's exhibit bias; students tolerant because of cultural variety in their community. | 13 |

Thirty-three teachers (13%) did not respond to this item. Of the 208 written comments, 190 provided suggestions for dealing with bias and stereotyping while 18 made the case that it is too risky to approach these issues or that it is not necessary.

### Empathy and Responsibility for Others

Responses to this item (Figure 4.4 below) indicate that helping students develop a sense of empathy with and responsibility for people in other parts of the world is seen as very important by 42% of the teachers in the sample, as important by 50%, and as unimportant by 3%. Five percent (5%) did not respond.

**Figure 4.4**



The wide variety (212) of ideas and strategies that were provided in response to a request for the most effective ways that teachers had found for encouraging these attitudes are set out in Table 4.6.

## Table 4.6

Teachers' Approaches to Encouraging Empathy and Responsibility

N = 234

| Approaches mentioned by teachers | Frequency |
|---|---|
| Discussion of issues, problems<br>Example: use films, speakers, readings, research as the basis for encouraging discussion of issues/problems that people face in communities in other parts of the world and here. | 74 |
| Compare life here and in other communities<br>Examples: compare standards of living, lifestyles; emphasize advantages that people have here. | 41 |
| Use student participation/action projects<br>Examples: student participation oriented activities in materials such as those provided by the Red Cross and UNICEF; foster child plan; pen pal or twinning program; fund raising for a project. | 29 |
| Role playing, simulations<br>Examples: base these strategies on students' personal experiences. | 21 |
| Various other approaches<br>Examples: encourage students to generate solutions to problems; develop analogy between classroom as a ‘family'' and global ‘‘family'' of nations; extrapolate from multicultural nature of students' own classroom; emphasize that the world is small and that its people are interdependent; encourage perspective taking by making students aware of how strange our ideas may seem to others; study exploitation in third world countries (slavery, agribusiness, multi-national companies); have children learn about the needs of others; emphasize respect at school and at home; use the Christian approach. | 39 |
| Not possible or not necessary<br>Example: children at this age hardly aware that there are people in other parts of the world; too young to be given this worry, they have other problems to cope with; cannot do much at school to alter attitudes learned at home. | 8 |

One teacher noted that, given grade 4 students' level of development, it was not realistic to expect them to be able to feel empathy for others. However, with 92% of the respondents indicating that they regard the development of empathy and a sense of responsibility as being either important or very important, and with the number of approaches that were suggested, it appears that there is strong support for these goals in the context of the grade 4 Social Studies program.

## TEACHING RESOURCES

The section of the questionnaire dealing with teaching resources surveyed teachers on the use, appreciation, and availability of textbooks and supplementary resource materials.

## Textbooks

Two items were directed at determining the extent to which teachers used textbooks, the particular textbooks that they used, and their assessment of these textbooks. With respect to the first matter, 44% said that they used a text, 41% said that they did not, and, surprisingly, 15% did not respond. The textbook selections and ratings of the 44% who used texts are shown below.

Rate the following texts if used.

| | | Very Satisfactory | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Number of Times Cited |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Communities Around the World<br>(Ginn & Co.) | 26.9% | 64.1% | 9.0% | 145 |
| 2. | The Global Village - The World of People<br>(McGraw-Hill Ryerson) | 7.4 | 76.5 | 16.2 | 68 |
| 3. | People Call It Home<br>(Oxford) | 20.7 | 65.5 | 13.8 | 29 |
| 4. | World Ways<br>(Globe Modern) | 6.7 | 86.7 | 6.7 | 15 |
| 5. | Others (specify) | 18.2 | 72.7 | 9.1 | 30 |

Texts:
World Communities (11)*
Canada, Our place in the World (1)
Our Big World (1)
Canada, Our People (1)
Regions of the World (1)
China Scholastic World Cultures (1)
Other:
Library resources (7)
Atlas (Gage) (Oxford) (2)
Your News (Canadian newspaper written for children) (1)
Correspondence Branch notes (1)
Variety of texts (1)
Series of booklets about children in other countries (1)
Whole language (1)
*Bracketed numerals indicate number of citations.

The large majority of those rating the texts suggest a reasonable level of satisfaction. When satisfactory and very satisfactory ratings are combined, the totals range from 84% to 93%. When the very satisfactory ratings are taken on their own, Communities Around the World, People Call it Home, and the teacher-found material identified under "Other" received markedly more positive ratings than did the remaining two options.

Finally, the material listed under "Other" may present both an opportunity and a problem. Some of the materials that teachers have found may well be very useful for the grade 4 program and it is possible that they should be reviewed by the Manitoba Department of Education and Training and made more widely available. Alternatively, materials cited may be in need of review and comment because of datedness, stereotypical content, or pedagogical limitations.

## Locating Social Studies Materials

One final item in this sub-section sought information on sources used by teachers to obtain materials for teaching Social Studies. Teachers were asked to acknowledge all courses that applied. The item and the response rates have been reproduced below.

Where do you locate resources which are current, appropriate to grade level and useable? Check ALL that apply.

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. personal resources | 85.8% |
| 2. your school | 87.8 |
| 3. your community | 57.1 |
| 4. resource centres | 48.4 |
| 5. workshops, inservices, conferences | 61.0 |
| 6. embassies, consulates | 40.2 |
| 7. current magazines, newspapers | 85.4 |
| 8. International Development Agencies | |
| IDEA Centre | 5.1 |
| Red Cross | 23.2 |
| UNICEF (United Nations) | 37.8 |
| Marquis Project | 7.5 |
| Other | 4.7 |

(Other):

CIDA (6)
Plenty Canada (1)
Cansave (1)
World Vision (2)
Twinning Project(1)
Mennonite Central Committee (1)
Save the Children Fund (1)

| | |
|---|---|
| 9. Department of Education and Training | |
| Education Manitoba publication | 16.5% |
| Manitoba Textbook catalogue | 29.1 |
| Library Audio/Video Dubbing | 29.1 |
| Library - films, tapes | 68.5 |
| Library - print materials/kits | 48.0 |
| Multicultural Education Resource Centre | 17.7 |

The above data suggest that appropriate materials are obtained from a wide variety of sources. However, the most frequently cited are teachers' own schools (88%), their personal resources (86%), and current magazines and newspapers (85%). All three of these sources have one thing in common; accessability. The importance of accessability is further emphasized by teachers' responses in the professional development section of the survey in which teachers reported that colleagues are by far their most important source of ideas and information for teaching Social Studies. These findings suggest that the centralized identification and publicizing of appropriate resources is only an initial step in getting materials into classrooms. Having materials readily available in every school and ensuring that respected teachers within each school are knowledgeable about the materials may be critical steps in their adoption.

Some of the other sources that were cited by a fairly high proportion of the respondents include Manitoba Education and Training's film and tape service (69%), professional development activities (61%), teachers' own communities (57%), resource centres (48%) and Manitoba Education and Training's print materials and kits service (48%).

Less frequently cited but potentially important are the various international development agencies that were listed under point eight. Two of these sources, the Red Cross and UNICEF, were indicated by 23% and 38% of the respondents respectively. Given the tendency of materials from these types of sources to encourage projects and activities that are congruent with the grade 4 curriculum's social participation activities, it may be important to promote greater awareness of these materials among teachers and to make them more readily available in the province's schools.

## Teaching Strategies

This section of the questionnaire presented a number of teaching strategies and learning activities that are in some instances common Social Studies approaches, and in others, less common approaches but ones that are encouraged in the grade 4 Social Studies curriculum. Teachers' ratings of the frequency with which they use these approaches are shown in the item reproduced below.

How often does each of the following happen in your Social Studies program?

| | | Daily | Weekly | Monthly | A Few Times a Year | Never | No Response |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Teacher presents information in class periods while children listen | 22.0% | 56.7% | 9.1% | 5.5% | - | 6.7% |
| 2. | Students research topics of interest to them | 2.8 | 20.9 | 29.9 | 34.6 | 3.5 | 8.3 |
| 3. | Teacher uses audio visual resources in class (e.g., films, filmstrips, T.V). | .8 | 29.1 | 45.3 | 17.3 | .8 | 6.7 |
| 4. | Students participate in field trips, e.g., museums, businesses | .4 | .8 | 8.3 | 72.8 | 11.8 | 5.9 |
| 5. | Teacher uses integrated approach in Social Studies unit | 18.1 | 24.4 | 16.5 | 28.0 | 5.1 | 7.9 |
| 6. | Students are encouraged to write to pen pals in other communities and exchange information with them | .4 | 1.2 | 13.0 | 33.5 | 44.5 | 7.5 |
| 7. | Teacher invites people from other communities to speak to students | - | - | 5.5 | 63.0 | 26.4 | 5.1 |
| 8. | Teacher brings in artifacts such as food, clothing, music, art into classroom | 1.6 | 9.4 | 26.4 | 54.3 | 2.4 | 5.9 |
| 9. | Students express their learning in art forms, writing, dramas, movement, etc. | 2.8 | 18.1 | 26.4 | 39.0 | 7.9 | 5.9 |
| 10. | Students take imaginary trips to other world communities | 2.8 | 4.7 | 15.4 | 35.0 | 33.9 | 8.3 |
| 11. | Teacher and students develop bulletin boards of current events | 6.3 | 11.0 | 20.5 | 34.3 | 21.3 | 6.7 |
| 12. | Teacher makes uses of student contributions such as books, newspaper clippings, artifacts, etc. | 9.4 | 25.6 | 26.8 | 28.0 | 4.7 | 5.5 |

These ratings should, to some degree, be looked at individually. In any classroom situation the frequency of use of each teaching strategy or learning activity will be influenced by considerations such as the time it requires, the purposes it serves, and, in some cases, the costs that it involves. Thus, even under ideal conditions one would expect a considerably higher frequency for the use of integration, which is a basic approach to instruction, than for field trips, which might be seen as episodic events within units of study. Additionally, the ratings should be considered in the context of the Social Studies curriculum's emphasis upon approaches that are varied and that encourage active and purposeful learner involvement.

Within the context of the forgoing comments, several approaches appear to have fairly low frequency-of-use ratings. While many teachers employ a reasonable range of appropriate teaching strategies, some potentially valuable approaches, such as information exchanges with students in other communities, the use of the experiences of local people, the use of food and other direct cultural experiences, and the use of drama and other forms of expression, are under-utilized. The frequency of field trips, for example, appears rather low in light of the Social Studies curriculum's emphasis upon use of community resources. This result may, however, be influenced by a perception of field trips as expensive, formal events requiring transportation and by restrictive school and school division policies. It is also possible that some informal forays into local communities have not been recorded as field trips.

Interpreting the data arising from this section suggests a need for materials, financial resources, and professional development directed at encouraging the use of a wider variety of appropriate teaching strategies and learning activities. Teachers' identification of professional development needs in that section of the survey supports this recommendation. In addition, the findings from sections of the survey dealing with resources and professional development suggest that any such efforts should be applied at the local and school levels and should involve teachers directly in planning and carrying out professional development and implementation efforts.

## Evaluation

The items in this section of the survey address the types of objectives that teachers stress as they evaluate, the sorts of evaluation strategies that they use for planning and grading purposes, and the needs that they have in this area.

Teachers were asked to indicate the emphasis that they placed upon each of the Social Studies curriculum's four types of objectives when they are formally evaluating student growth. This item is reproduced below:

**In formally evaluating student growth, what emphasis do you place on the following types of objectives:**

| | Great Emphasis | Some Emphasis | No Emphasis | No Response |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Knowledge Objectives | 41.3% | 53.5% | .8% | 4.3% |
| 2. Thinking and Research Skills Objectives | 63.4 | 31.5 | .4 | 4.7 |
| 3. Attitudes and Values Objectives | 43.3 | 49.2 | 3.1 | 4.3 |
| 4. Social Participation Objectives | 43.7 | 46.1 | 5.1 | 5.1 |

Slightly more than 40% of the teachers report placing great emphasis upon formal evaluation of student growth with respect to knowledge objectives, attitude and value objectives, and social participation objectives, while roughly 50% say that they place some emphasis upon evaluation in these areas. With respect to evaluating thinking and research skills objectives, 63% indicated placing a great emphasis and 32% some emphasis on the objective, a finding that is consistent with teachers' choices when asked to express their views of the Social Studies, where they tended to prefer those Social Studies goal statements that emphasize skills.

These data also indicate that there are small proportions of teachers who report that when they evaluate they place no emphasis upon either attitude and value objectives (3%) or social participation (5%). Formal evaluation of these types of objectives is commonly regarded as being much more difficult than it is in the case of either knowledge or thinking and research skills objectives and it is, if anything, surprising that these percentages were not higher. What the data do not reveal are the sorts of approaches teachers use to carry out formal evaluation of attitude and value objectives and social participation objectives.

In the item shown below, teachers were asked to rate 11 means of evaluation with respect to the importance that they place upon them in instructional planning and in grading:

How important are the following for student evaluation in your Social Studies class?

| | For Instructional Planning Purposes | | | | | For Grading Purposes | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Very Important % | Important % | Not Important % | N/A % | No Response % | Very Important % | Important % | Not Important % | N/A % | No Response % |
| 1. Samples of individual student work | 33.5 | 53.5 | 3.1 | 1.6 | 8.3 | 48.4 | 41.3 | 1.6 | 0.8 | 7.9 |
| 2. Samples of group projects | 20.9 | 59.1 | 5.9 | 4.7 | 9.4 | 29.5 | 50.4 | 5.5 | 4.3 | 10.2 |
| 3. Performance in day-to-day lessons | 45.7 | 42.5 | 1.6 | .4 | 9.8 | 50.8 | 36.6 | 3.1 | - | 9.4 |
| 4. Notebooks | 15.7 | 59.8 | 13.0 | 2.0 | 9.4 | 22.4 | 57.9 | 10.6 | .4 | 8.7 |
| 5. Oral presentations | 13.8 | 60.2 | 9.8 | 5.5 | 10.6 | 22.4 | 52.4 | 8.3 | 6.3 | 10.6 |
| 6. Role playing, simulation, debates | 7.9 | 38.6 | 21.3 | 17.7 | 14.6 | 8.7 | 34.3 | 28.3 | 16.9 | 11.8 |
| 7. Participation in class discussions | 42.9 | 44.1 | 1.2 | 1.6 | 10.2 | 42.1 | 43.3 | 3.5 | .8 | 10.2 |
| 8. Class tests | 14.2 | 59.1 | 14.6 | 2.8 | 9.4 | 23.6 | 54.3 | 11.8 | 2.0 | 8.3 |
| 9. School-wide tests | .8 | 10.6 | 24.0 | 51.6 | 13.0 | - | 10.6 | 24.8 | 51.6 | 13.0 |
| 10. Division-district tests | .4 | 13.0 | 25.2 | 50.4 | 11.0 | - | 10.6 | 27.6 | 49.2 | 12.6 |
| 11. Self-evaluation by students | 8.3 | 42.9 | 10.6 | 24.4 | 13.8 | 9.1 | 39.0 | 16.5 | 24.4 | 11.0 |

Six of the evaluation strategies received noticeably higher "very important" ratings for the purpose of grading than they did for instructional planning. The reverse was nottrue. That is, there were no strategies that received significantly higher ratings for purposes of instructional planning. However, these same six means of evaluation received higher "important" ratings for instructional than for grading purposes. This might suggest that in Social Studies, grade 4 teachers place more importance on evaluation for grading than upon evaluation for instructional planning, or that certain types of evaluation strategies are more appropriate for instruction, others more appropriate for grading.

The other general impressions arising from this item is that the respondents use a fairly wide variety of evaluation strategies for both instructional planning and grading purposes and that they prefer strategies that are informal, ongoing, teacher-developed, and observational.

When invited to identify what would help them evaluate student progress in Social Studies, the teachers in the sample wrote in 128 comments that cover a broad range of needs and issues. These responses were categorized and are displayed in Table 4.7 below.

## Table 4.7

Teacher Evaluation Needs

| Evaluation Needs | Frequency |
|---|---|
| Materials, resources, and time for evaluation<br>Examples: an evaluation guide; examples of how to evaluate projects; appropriate texts and aids; ideas for evaluating drama, role playing and simulations; materials to help identify attitudes, values and knowledge; supports for evaluating units; time, student/teacher ratios and working conditions that make evaluation possible. | 42 |
| Curriculum related comments<br>Examples: would like to see the results of the evaluation of the curriculum; a more precise curriculum with more specific objectives and skills; a recommended text or mandatory curriculum; sample units; unit objectives. | 16 |
| Inservice related comments<br>Examples: daily evaluation of student progress. | 6 |
| General comments (includes a wide variety of comments)<br>Examples: require maps related to each community; would like to learn how Department tests are scored; better research project outlines. | 36 |
| No supports needed or not sure whether supports are needed | 24 |
| Other comments<br>Examples: Social Studies Assessment a good example and resource; Social Studies consultant provided many good ideas. | 4 |

With such a wide range of comments it is difficult to identify the priorities selected by the respondents. However, when taken together with the responses to the previous items, it does suggest that teachers have an interest in how to evaluate in the context of varied types of student activities, including drama and simulations. The comments also seem to suggest a desire to see concrete examples of approaches to evaluation.

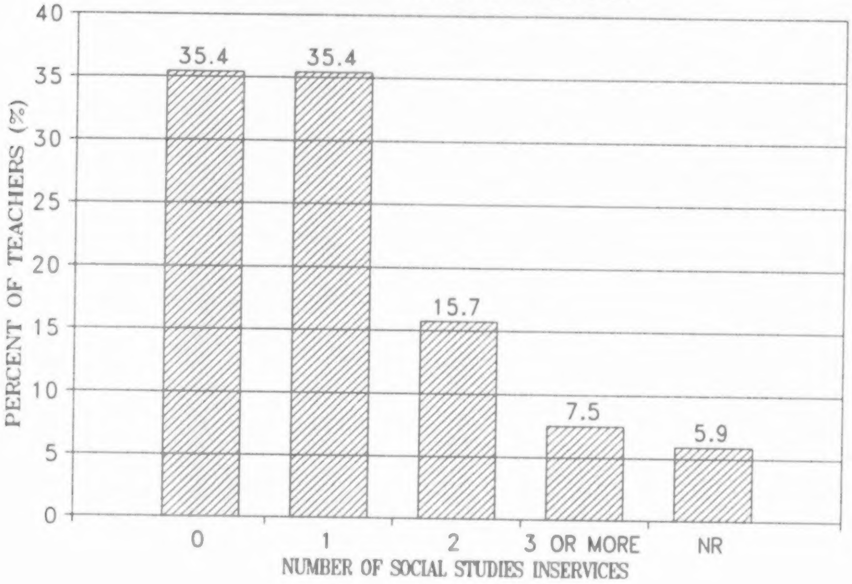
### Professional Development in Social Studies

The three items in this final section of the survey addressed different aspects of professional development; the number of Social Studies inservices the teachers had attended; current inservice needs; and sources of ideas for teaching Social Studies.

Figure 4.5 below indicates the extent of teacher participation in inservice activities in the past two years.

**Figure 4.5**

PERCENT OF GRADE 4 TEACHERS WHO HAVE TAKEN SOCIAL STUDIES INSERVICES



The responses indicate that the large majority of grade 4 teachers have attended very few Social Studies inservices in the past two years. Of special concern are the findings that 35% have attended none and another 35% have attended only one inservice. A minority of 23% reported attending two or more Social Studies inservices. Adding to this concern is the fact that these figures, as low as they are, mask an even lower level of involvement in inservice activities specifically related to the grade 4 curriculum. In responding to their use of curriculum guides, 51% of the teachers said that they had not attended inservices on the grade 4 curriculum at any time. Presumably, if this latter item had been based on just the past two years, the proportion of teachers with no grade 4 inservice attendance would have been even higher than 51%. These results point to a clear and pressing need for increased Social Studies inservice opportunities at the grade 4 level.

The next item in this sub-section asked teachers to identify their most pressing needs for Social Studies inservice. Of all the requests for written comments, this one, which was situated at the end of a lengthy questionnaire, resulted in the largest number of responses. The 230 comments, which are summarized in Table 4.8, cover a wide range of needs and concerns related to inservice.

## Table 4.8

Social Studies Inservice Needs Identified by Grade 4 Teachers N = 254

| Needs | Frequency |
|---|---|
| Materials and Resources<br>Examples: Canadian-produced materials; materials that can be used to help set up units; materials that can be purchased or borrowed; chance to examine kits; more kits relate to curriculum; up-to-date resources on countries and global issues; more material in a second language; games/simulations; community booklets issued by the Department; current textbooks with recent statistical information; materials for mainstreamed students; sample tests. | 114 |
| Teaching<br>Examples: techniques for evaluation; teaching the program in multi-grade situations; variety of teaching methods; ideas on how to teach maps, research skills, and geographic terms; opportunities to share ideas with other teachers; how to cope with problems arising from the limited time available to teach Social Studies; modifying studies for mainstreamed students; dealing with prejudice; how to prepare themes; how to study types of government; interesting ways to teach current world affairs; dealing with low reading levels; new teaching strategies; developing learning centres; how to integrate. | 57 |
| Curriculum<br>Examples: units which lend themselves to integration with other subjects; assistance with curriculum guide and how to use it; make guide more specific; make program more concrete for children, with less writing and research; new units of study; unit plans with good resources and ways to evaluate; sessions on sharing and unit planning. | 34 |
| Other Comments<br>Examples: more frequent and shorter inservice offerings; good presenters; fine inservice job has been done in our division. | 14 |
| No Needs at this Time | 11 |

Teachers report that their inservice needs are with respect to appropriate resources and approaches to teaching, and that their needs are varied within these broad categories. The sheer volume of the comments that were written in suggests that further Social Studies related professional development is important to teachers.

The last item on the survey (which should have been numbered 3 instead of 4), and which is reproduced below, asked teachers to rate the importance of several sources of ideas and information with respect to their own teaching of Social Studies:

How important are each of the following as sources of ideas and information for your teaching of Social Studies?

| | | Very Important | Important | Not Important | Not Applicable | No Response |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Colleagues? | 37.0% | 46.1% | 5.5% | 3.9% | 7.5% |
| 2. | Department Heads? | 2.8 | 9.4 | 18.5 | 59.1 | 10.2 |
| 3. | School Administration? | 3.1 | 24.8 | 36.2 | 22.4 | 13.4 |
| 4. | Superintendent? | .8 | 9.1 | 41.7 | 35.8 | 12.6 |
| 5. | School Division Consultants? | 7.9 | 27.2 | 19.3 | 33.9 | 11.8 |
| 6. | M.T.S. (e.g., SAG locals)? | 13.4 | 41.7 | 19.7 | 11.4 | 13.8 |
| 7. | Small Schools Conference? | 16.5 | 27.6 | 10.6 | 28.7 | 16.5 |
| 8. | Other (please specify)? | 5.1 | 2.0 | - | .4 | 92.5 |

Library (4)
Community members, local
Resource persons (2)
Inservices (1)
Curriculum guide (1)
Resource (1)

Own research, observations, etc. (4)
University courses (2)
Social Studies Curriculum Team (1)
Hutterite teacher inservice (1)
Grade group meetings (1)
Texts and other materials (1)

The most striking statistic arising from this item is the relatively high level of importance that teachers place on their colleagues as sources of ideas. Colleagues were rated as either important or very important by 83% of the respondents, nearly twice as high a percentage as the next highest sources. The data also suggest that the M.T.S. through its locals and through SAG, and Manitoba Education and Training through its Small Schools Conference, are seen as relatively important sources of ideas.

Also of interest in these results are the ratings given school division consultants and principals. Since the number of Social Studies consultants in Manitoba is extremely small, many of the 35% of the respondents who rated divisional consultants as either important or very important were probably referring to general elementary or Language Arts consultants. If more divisions had Social Studies consultants this rating might well have been higher. With respect to principals, the rather low 28% of teachers who see them as either important or very important sources of ideas is probably a reflection of the long standing assumption that principals are managers and public relations officers first and curriculum leaders second. Both of these statistics suggest that improvements in the teaching of Social Studies may be in part dependent upon policy directions taken within school divisions. Given the importance that teachers place upon local and readily accessible sources, more divisional Social Studies consultants and more principals who see curriculum leadership as a primary role could have a powerful impact on the quality of Social Studies programs.

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## OBSERVATIONS AND DISCUSSION

The survey of teacher opinion yielded a number of interesting results which may assist in the further implementation of the grade 4 Social Studies curriculum in Manitoba schools. Relevant sections of the survey will be discussed below.

In examining teacher preparedness for teaching grade 4 Social Studies, it is surprising to note the lack of background in Social Studies reported by teachers, the lack of availability of Social Studies inservice activities, and the low rate of teacher participation, especially in curriculum-specific inservice sessions. Given this information, it is not surprising to note the large number of needs expressed by teachers for inservice activities in a variety of areas. Add to the above analysis the fact that a majority of teachers report spending less than the allotted time on Social Studies at the grade 4 level, and it could lead to the conclusion that there is insufficient emphasis placed on Social Studies in the school system at the present time.

Most teachers who responded to the survey indicated that they used the curriculum guide and expressed a generally high level of satisfaction with its content. Specifically, teachers were satisfied or very satisfied with the K-12 overview, grade 4 overview, unit overview, topics and focusing questions, knowledge objectives, thinking and research skills objectives, attitudes and values objectives, and social participation objectives. Less satisfaction was expressed with suggested teaching strategies and learning activities, learning resources, and strategies for evaluating students. There also appears to be some ambivalence in the approach selected by teachers in teaching the grade 4 curriculum. While 56% of teachers use a combination of community and country approach in their teaching, only 11% follow strictly the curriculum recommendation to use the community approach. Reasons given for their selection applied equally to countries or communities. However, in selecting specific communities or countries for study, teachers made choices, which were reasonably representative of the world's geographical and cultural diversity. It is also worthy to note that some teachers allowed students to select communities which interested them for individual or small-group study. Survey results also indicate that teachers found it important to include world issues and current events as part of their program.

Teachers generally seem undecided as to the advisability of teaching map skills and/or thinking and research skills in context or as separate skills in isolation from their application. There is more agreement, however, that dealing with bias and stereotyping, and developing empathy and responsibility for other people are important elements of the grade 4 curriculum.

In examining the data on teacher resources, it is evident that teachers express an obvious preference for materials that are readily accessible such as magazines and newspapers, school, and personal resources. What is surprising, however, given the above data, is that more teachers do not use textbook materials which would, by definition, be local or in-school resources. In any case, the textbooks that were used received a satisfactory rating by teachers. It is worthwhile to note that a number of outside resources were used by teachers, including Manitoba Education and Training's library materials, and workshops, inservices, and conferences. For some portion of their program, teachers could be encouraged to make more use of the resources available from international development agencies such as UNICEF and the Red Cross.

The interpretation of the data on teaching strategies, evaluation, and professional development in Social Studies leads to the conclusion that there is a need for inservice activities specifically related to teaching strategies, techniques in evaluation, materials and resources, as well as on the curriculum guide. Teachers indicate that they use a wide variety of teaching strategies. However, some obvious ones are overlooked or downplayed. While teachers use a wide variety of strategies for instruction and grading, they still expressed many needs for assistance in this area. The rate of response to suggested inservice activities is not surprising given the obvious lack of participation in such activities by Social Studies teachers in the recent past.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on the results of the grade 4 teacher survey.

1. Opportunities should be provided within degree programs, certificate programs and other avenues of professional development in the Province for teachers to increase their expertise in areas related to the teaching of Social Studies.

2. Manitoba Education and Training, in consultation with teachers and school administrators, should review the time allocations for school subjects and that this review take into account both the amount of time that is reasonable for meeting program expectations and the working conditions that will enable recommended program time allotments to be met.

3. Manitoba Education and Training, in reviewing the Grade Four Curriculum Guide, should take into account the concerns that approximately one-quarter of the sampled grade 4 teachers expressed about those dimensions of the guide that deal with teaching strategies and learning activities, learning resources, and evaluation strategies.

4. Manitoba Education and Training should strengthen the Curriculum Guide's rationale for the small scale community focus used in the study of world communities.

5. Teachers should place greater emphasis on the study of communities outside of Canada.

6. Teachers should work towards full implementation of the Curriculum Guide's small scale community focus as the vehicle for the study of world communities.

7. Manitoba Education and Training and school divisions should both identify and develop resources that will assist teachers in implementing the Curriculum's small scale community focus.

8. Manitoba Education and Training and school divisions should find ways to make the resources referred in Recommendation #7 readily accessible to teachers at the local level.

9. Manitoba Education and Training should revise the Grade 4 Curriculum Guide so that it more clearly supports and demonstrates the teaching of map and research skills in the context of community studies rather than in separate units.

10. Manitoba Education and Training should identify and make available resources and teaching strategies/learning activities that will assist teachers in their efforts to deal with current events, world problems, stereotyping, and the development of empathy, in ways that are appropriate to grade four students and supportive of the goals of the grade 4 curriculum.

11. Manitoba Education and Training, school divisions, professional organizations, and universities should work together to provide professional development opportunities directed to the social studies needs of grade 4 teachers. Particular attention should be given to professional development related to implementing the Curriculum's small scale community focus, teaching skills in the context of community studies, appropriate resources, varied teaching strategies, and evaluation.

12. Manitoba Education and Training, school divisions, professional organizations, and universities should work together to develop professional development expertise among teachers so that they can serve as sources of ideas for their colleagues in their schools and school divisions.

13. Manitoba Education and Training, school divisions, professional organizations, and universities should work together to provide incentives for teachers to take advantage of professional development opportunities.

14. Elementary principals should familiarize themselves with the Grade Four Social Studies Curriculum and the needs of teachers who are implementing the grade 4 world communities program.

# CHAPTER 5

# Grade Four Teacher Interviews

In order to probe more deeply into teacher perceptions of grade 4 Social Studies, the teachers of the 30 groups of students selected to participate in the observational study were interviewed for approximately 30 minutes on the same day as their students were involved in the observational study. The interviews were taped, transcribed, and analyzed. A summary of the findings makes up the content of this chapter.

Caution must be exercised in interpreting the results of these interviews. Although care was taken to select teachers at random for these interviews, the sample, because of its small size, may not be representative of teachers as a whole. Further, attempts at eliminating interviewer bias and establishing reliability in the interviewers' techniques were limited. Where results from the interviews follow the trend established in the survey questionnaire, one feels more confident in accepting the results. Where results tend to point in the opposite direction, further investigation is warranted.

The questionnaire used to guide the teachers' interviews focused on many of the same topics as the teacher survey. Teachers were questioned on the content of the curriculum guide; knowledge, thinking and research skills, attitudes and values, and social participation objectives; resources; teaching strategies; evaluation practices; and general impressions of the grade 4 Social Studies program. Thirty teacher interviews were analyzed. The questionnaire used for the interviews is found in Appendix B.

## ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

### USE OF THE 1982 CURRICULUM GUIDE

All 30 teachers stated they used the curriculum guide to varying degrees. Of the 23 who said they used the guide extensively, 20 gave evidence of being aware of the community approach intended by the curriculum. The seven who qualified their use in some manner generally indicated that they used the curriculum as a guide or a reference point. Only one teacher gave evidence of using the old (pre-1982) curriculum guide. These responses parallel the trend established in the survey where the vast majority (88%) of teachers report using the curriculum guide.

## CONTENT SELECTION

Teachers were asked to respond to three questions relating to the content of the curriculum guide - one had to do with how teachers selected communities for study, a second asked teachers to explain why they chose a community or a country approach, and a third asked teachers to respond to the organizational structure of the curriculum.

### Teacher Versus Pupil Selection

Teachers were allowed to provide as many reasons as they wished in response to how they chose communities for study. The 51 reasons provided were grouped into five categories yielding frequencies as indicated in parentheses: availability of resources (19); teacher interest (14); students' choice (10); meeting goals of the curriculum (5); and personal knowledge (3).

The reason most frequently cited (19 times) by teachers, categorized as the availability of resources, referred to materials available in text books and libraries, correspondence materials, resource people, and units prepared by other teachers which had been circulated widely through inservice sessions. It is apparent, from teacher response to this part of the interview, that resources play a key role in content selection. This same observation was made based on the results of the teacher survey. It is also interesting to note that teachers' own interests were frequently given as reasons for selecting course content. While the fact that 10 of the 30 teachers provided reasons that could be interpreted as being students' choices, closer analysis reveals that students' choices were made on the basis of what the teacher thought students would like, or alternatively, that students were selecting from what had been taught in past years based on information gathered through older siblings or friends. It appears, based on these interviews, that content selection is largely teacher driven. Some of the results in the teacher survey were ambiguous on this question as a number of teachers (41%) indicating they gave students choices in course selection were unable or neglected to indicate how frequently they did so. The most positive statistic from the survey indicated that 20% of teachers give students from one to three opportunities each year to select communities of interest to them for study. Overall, with information taken from both sources, it appears that teacher selection is more important than student selection of communities for study and that teacher selection is driven, to a large extent, by the availability of resources.

### Community Versus Country Approach

When asked whether they chose a community or a country approach to selecting content for study, only four of the teachers interviewed indicated that they used a strict community approach as suggested in the 1982 curriculum guide. Surprisingly, one teacher used the old (pre-1982) curriculum and three teachers indicated that they used the country approach to the teaching of Social Studies. The majority of teachers indicated that they used a combination of a community and a country approach or that they were aware of the community approach but used the country approach instead for a variety of reasons, many of which were related to a lack of readily available resource materials.

In summary then, 85% of the teachers indicated that they were aware of the community approach suggested by the 1982 curriculum, 13% were using it correctly and 36% were partially respecting its orientation. This result parallels to a large extent the data analyzed in the teacher survey questionnaire.

### Sequencing of Instruction in the Curriculum

This question was meant to probe teachers' opinions on teaching mapping skills prior to or during the study of communities. All 30 teachers interviewed stated that they started the year with a unit on mapping skills and that they thought that this was appropriate for the grade 4 level. This result is at odds with the teacher survey where results were more divided. The members of the Technical Advisory Committee were not in unanimous agreement as to which approach should be recommended.

## KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES

Teachers were asked to respond to four questions related to the knowledge objectives of the curriculum. They were asked whether they thought the concepts in the curriculum were appropriate for the grade level, whether the geographic terminology was appropriate for the grade level, what sort of understanding of community grade 3 students possessed on entering grade 4, and whether they thought their students should be learning about world issues.

### Curricular Concepts

Fifteen of the 30 teachers interviewed thought that the concepts of the curriculum were appropriate for the grade level. The remaining 15 teachers made a total of 23 comments relating to knowledge concepts in the curriculum - eight comments referred to the lack of suitability of the concepts to the grade 4 level, six comments referred to the difficulties caused in teaching the concepts proposed because of the range of students' abilities, three comments mentioned the difficulties caused by the language of the curriculum, another three to the number of concepts to be taught, two mentioned the gap in curriculum between grades 3 and 4, and one comment referred to the lack of time available to cover the curriculum.

## Geographic Terminology

Eleven of the 30 teachers interviewed thought that the geographic terminology was appropriate for the grade level, seventeen teachers felt that at least some terminology created problems, and two teachers either were not asked or did not respond to this question.

Some of the terms the teachers indicated as presenting problems for the students were: strait, peninsula, gulf, isthmus, bay, plateau, delta, latitude, and longitude. Some teachers even mentioned that the concepts conveyed by the words city, province, and country created problems for grade 4 students.

Comments from teachers seem to illustrate that they were not clear as to the kinds of expectations they should have for students in this section and, in some instances, teachers seemed to indicate a lack of understanding of some of the terminology themselves.

Possible explanations suggested for the difficulties experienced by students in this section include: the lack of real-life experience with landforms, the lack of maturity in grade 4 students to master these concepts, and inappropriate teaching strategies used to convey the meaning of the words and the concepts they convey.

## Students' Grade Three Experience

Of the 29 teachers who responded to this question, 21 indicated that students had a basic understanding of the concept of community on arrival in grade 4, four indicated they did not, two were undecided, and two did not know.

While twenty-one of 30 teachers thought that grade 3 students had a basic understanding of community as they entered grade 4, it is interesting to note that many teachers themselves had difficulty in the articulation of the concept of a community. In fact, 13 of the 30 teachers chose not to try to state what they thought a community was. This may be because the statements about attributes of the concept of community are not clearly spelled out in the curriculum, because certain teachers lack sufficient background in the social sciences, or because appropriate resources to convey this concept have not been sought out or found. One also wonders whether or not teachers were responding to this question in the way it was asked and to what extent the responses provide an appropriate reaction to what was sought.

### World Issues

Of the 28 teachers who were asked whether or not grade 4 students should be learning about world issues, 22 responded affirmatively and 6 negatively. Topics mentioned by those teachers favouring the study of world issues by grade 4 students ranged from the Chernobyl disaster, through to oil spills, drought, acid rain, and atomic warfare. Teachers against studying world issues thought this would be too difficult, confusing, and worrisome for their students.

Overall, the impression given by teachers with regard to including world issues in their program was that these formed an informal, or incidental part of their teaching. Perhaps some thought should be given to providing teachers with support in identifying appropriate world issues for grade 4 students and better strategies for dealing with these in the classroom.

## THINKING AND RESEARCH SKILLS OBJECTIVES

Teachers' opinions on two specific skill areas, research and mapping skills, were solicited by researchers in this portion of the interview.

### Research Skills

All 30 teachers provided information on their expectations of grade 4 students in the area of research skills and, with one exception, teachers interpreted these skills to be library or reading skills.

In order to get a better understanding of teacher responses to the kinds of research skills they expected from grade 4 students, responses were grouped around a 7-stage research framework consisting of: identifying the question, locating sources of information, locating information within sources, deriving information from sources, organizing information from sources, preparation of a final report, and presentation of a final report.

### Identifying the Question

Of the six teachers who used question identification as the starting point for research, only one allowed students to select the question for study. Moreover, most of the 30 teachers did not give any recognition to the importance of students deciding on questions or topics to research.

### Locating Sources of Information

Several teachers noted that there were problems in locating enough reference materials for the students to do research. Also stated was the fact that they, themselves, had difficulty procuring ready access to materials needed to teach various units in grade 4 Social Studies. Of those teachers who made specific comments on locating sources of information for students, six stated they had books brought to the classroom, five that they took students to the public library, and one that students were encouraged to use the public library. It is interesting to note that 15 teachers referred to the encyclopedia as the major reference source for students. One reference to each of the following sources was made: reference books for students, children's literature, magazines, newspapers, films and filmstrips, and the telephone book.

### Locating Information Within the Source

Three teachers referred either to the need to teach or to help grade 4 students apply skills relating to the use of a table of contents and the use of an index in locating information.

### Deriving Information from the Source

Few teachers interviewed seemed to see it as their responsibility to teach such skills as skimming and note taking while doing research. Whether this is a result of a lack of availability of appropriate resources or whether it is a belief among teachers that these skills are learned elsewhere in school is difficult to determine.

### Organizing Information from the Source

Only one teacher clearly indicated that students were expected to organize the information they had gathered. Two other teachers inferred that they expected this from students.

### Preparation and Presentation of a Final Report

Of the 30 teachers interviewed, three indicated they asked students to provide written reports. Two of these teachers indicated they had their students present their reports to the class.

It is difficult to summarize the comments from this portion of the interview. While the information gleaned from the analysis fell short of demonstrating any support for the model used to analyze the information gleaned, it must be stated that the interview was not specifically structured in this manner. More information may have been obtained had the questioning been structured differently.

## Group Skills

Twenty-four of the 30 teachers indicated that they used group activities in the teaching of grade 4 Social Studies while the other six indicated they did not use this strategy. Random and varied comments provided by teachers as to tasks assigned to groups, the structure of groups, and the evaluation of group work were inconsequential and inconclusive. So, while 80% of teachers indicate they use group activities, their responses did not provide enough information to determine how this approach is implemented.

## Mapping Skills

A number of questions were devised to gather data on the teaching of mapping skills in the grade 4 curriculum. It was felt important to know whether teachers taught mapping skills at the beginning of the school year or throughout the year, and also to determine the amount of time spent on these skills. The interview also sought to determine the appropriateness of the mapping skills for the grade level and the use of globes and atlases in the teaching of grade 4 Social Studies.

Twenty-six (26) of the 30 teachers stated they taught the mapping skills as a unit at the beginning of the school year. One teacher taught the skills throughout the year and the responses from the other three teachers were unclear.

What was more interesting to note was the variation in the length of time spent by teachers in the teaching of mapping skills: four teachers spent from 2 to 3 weeks; three teachers spent from 4 to 6 weeks; four teachers spent 8 weeks; two teachers spent 10 weeks; four teachers spent 12 weeks; and nine stated they taught mapping skills until Christmas. This means that 63% of teachers interviewed spent eight weeks or more teaching these skills while 43% spent more than 12 weeks. In addition, several teachers indicated that they continued to teach mapping skills as they arose in the remaining units.

Several teachers had concerns about the appropriateness of mapping skills, especially when it came to latitude, longitude, and the teaching of scale. Overall, 20 teachers thought that the mapping skills were appropriate to the grade level.

It can be seen from the above discussion that the amount of time devoted to mapping skills is far greater than suggested by the curriculum. Weak results on the geographic knowledge portion of the written test are surprising when this information is taken into account.

### Use of Globes and Atlases

Twenty-six teachers reported using globes in their Social Studies classes while 28 reported using atlases. Both were seen to be important parts of the Social Studies program. The most commonly mentioned atlases were Nelson, cited six times, and MacMillan, cited five times. The high response rate on usage indicates that most schools have classroom sets of atlases for students and globes available in their classrooms.

## ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Teachers were asked if they attempted to deal with bias and stereotyping in their grade 4 program, and whether or not they thought it was possible to develop empathy for children in other parts of the world. They were also asked to provide examples of how these were done.

Twenty-two teachers stated they attempted to deal with issues based on bias and stereotyping, eight said they did not. Eight teachers indicated that they dealt with these questions on a casual basis as they arose in the class, while another eight teachers indicated that they dealt with these issues as a planned part of their program. As to the strategies used by teachers in dealing with bias and stereotyping, 17 said they used classroom discussions, two stated they used daily news broadcasts, one reported using films, and one other reported using stories as a basis for discussion.

Twenty-six teachers thought it was possible for grade 4 students to develop empathy for children in other parts of the world. Three teachers responded negatively, and one teacher was not asked the question.

When asked how they were able to encourage students to show and feel empathy for others, the teachers interviewed provided a range of suggestions. Eleven thought that discussion was the way that they encouraged this. Seven teachers reported using some kind of direct action such as writing to pen pals or dealing directly with incidents that arose on the playground. Another six teachers used a variety of stories, films, and speakers to help students develop empathy. Eight teachers said they did nothing to encourage the development of empathy.

It is encouraging that so many teachers report involving students in activities dealing with bias and stereotyping and the development of empathy in students for children different from themselves. More emphasis should be placed on these objectives of the curriculum, however, as these questions become increasingly important in people's lives in today's society.

## SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

In this portion of the interview, teachers were asked what kinds of social participation activities they thought were appropriate for grade 4 students.

Sixteen teachers thought there were social participation activities that were possible. Ten could not think of ways to have the students involved in social participation activities. Four teachers did not know or asked what was meant by social participation goals.

Of the group who thought they could have the students involved in social participation activities, the most commonly suggested activities were letter writing, collecting money, bringing in people from other countries to speak about life in that country, display days/social studies fairs, and dealing with local problems.

This is one goal with which teachers indicated a need for help.

## RESOURCES

This section of the interview sought to ascertain the use and availability of resources in grade 4 Social Studies. While it can be stated that 15 teachers reported having a text, that 14 teachers reported not using a text, and that several teachers reported using more than one textual source, the information gleaned from this question is fragmentary. More valuable and reliable information on textual material is found in the teacher survey.

When asked to speak to the availability of resources for teaching world communities, twenty teachers stated that finding appropriate materials was a problem for them. Two relied heavily on school librarians to locate the resources for them. Seven said they had no problem locating resources. Of these seven, four were using a country approach. Two of the four teachers using the community approach suggested in the curriculum said that they had no trouble locating resources for this approach.

The main concern mentioned by teachers in locating materials was the location of those which had a community focus. At best, they had been able to locate resources for one community. Trying to locate resources for two communities in the same area was almost impossible for them. Several teachers cited this as their major problem in teaching this program.

In many parts of this interview and in the teacher survey, teachers have made it clear that they have major difficulties with the location of resources to match the intent of the curriculum. It is becoming evident that these resources must be found or that some changes must be made to the approach suggested in the 1982 curriculum.

## TEACHING APPROACHES

Teachers were also asked to provide effective ways of giving students an understanding and empathy for people who live in different parts of the world and to explain how it was possible to enable grade 4 students to develop a visual image of a community in another part of the world.

The first question revealed more information about the strategies used by grade 4 teachers than did the second question. Twelve teachers reported using visual materials, four referred to bringing concrete material from another country into class, and three teachers brought in outside speakers. Eight teachers stated they used expressive arts which included stories, music, games, and drama as part of their programs. Class discussion and group work were also mentioned by teachers.

Some 22 teachers thought students could develop a visual image of a community in another part of the world. Eight, however, felt this was very difficult for grade 4 students. Suggestions as to how this could be facilitated involved changing the classroom environment, involving students in art work to show what a different community would be like, using visual aids, and constructing a model community.

It is obvious that resources influence activities in the classroom and that teacher ideas are also very important. While many sound ideas were brought forward by various teachers, it is not at all clear that teachers have sufficient strategies and techniques at their disposal to meet the objectives of the curriculum.

Curriculum revisions and professional development activities which speak to these concerns should be considered.

## EVALUATION OF STUDENT PROGRESS

Teachers were asked to provide a rough estimate of the emphases they placed on evaluation for instruction and evaluation for grading of the four categories of objectives contained in the grade 4 curriculum. Table 5.1 describes the relative importance accorded these objectives as based on responses provided by teachers.

### Table 5.1

Teacher Emphasis on Curriculum Objectives During Evaluation for Instruction and Grading

| Objectives | No. of Teachers Emphasizing Each Objective | |
|---|---|---|
| | Evaluation for Instruction N = 26 | Evaluation for Grading N = 27 |
| Knowledge . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | 10 | 15 |
| Thinking and Research Skills . . . . . . . . . | 6 | 5 |
| Equal Emphasis on Knowledge and Skills . . . | 6 | 5 |
| Attitudes and Values . . . . . . . . . . . . . | 1 | 1 |
| Social Participation . . . . . . . . . . . . . | 1 | 1 |
| Equal Emphasis on All Four Goals . . . . . . | 2 | - |

As is obvious from the table, teachers place a greater emphasis on knowledge objectives than on any other objective for both instruction and grading. It should also be noted that the concentration on knowledge objectives is even greater when activities are prepared for grading. Teachers' comments in this portion of the interview support the need for assistance in working with attitudes and values and social participation objectives. Only one teacher provided an insight into differences given to the weighting of objectives for instruction and for grading.

## EVALUATION OF THE GRADE 4 SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM

Five questions were asked to get teachers to provide a general evaluation of the grade 4 curriculum. Teachers were asked to discuss what they thought most interested their students about the grade 4 curriculum and what they felt to be the most difficult part for students. They were also asked to state what they would change about the grade 4 program, what they would require for inservice in Social Studies, and, finally, to give an overall rating to the grade 4 curriculum.

### Students' Interests

Twelve teachers thought that the students were very interested in studying the communities/countries for their own sake. Another seven teachers thought they were interested in the countries and communities because of the differences between their own communities and the ones they were studying. Animals of these countries were also seen to be interesting to students. Two teachers thought that students responded well to the program because they considered themselves to be more grown up when studying places that were in the news. Six teachers thought that their students liked the grade 4 program because they were learning about other children and their way of life in different parts of the world. Six teachers thought that the students enjoyed the mapping skills unit the most.

## Program Difficulties

In identifying the most difficult part of the grade 4 Social Studies curriculum, 19 teachers said the mapping skills were the most difficult part of the program and five said it was expecting too much for grade 4 students to do research. Two thought teaching attitudes and values to grade 4 students was most difficult. One teacher thought the idea of a community study approach was too difficult. Yet another teacher thought the program was too heavy for the amount of time available.

## Program Changes

When asked what they would change about the grade 4 program, thirteen teachers stated they needed more and better resources, especially to teach the community approach. Four teachers thought there should be more stress on Canada in grade 4. It is interesting to note that only three teachers stated they would change the community approach.

## Inservice Requirements

This question generated 30 suggestions from 27 teachers. These suggestions are categorized in Table 5.2 below.

Table 5.2

Suggested Topics for Inservice in Grade Four Social Studies

| Topics Suggested | Frequency N = 27 |
|---|---|
| Teaching the community approach | 8 |
| Units prepared by other teachers | 5 |
| Mapping skills | 3 |
| Integrated approaches | 5 |
| Resources | 4 |
| Evaluation | 3 |
| Research skills | 1 |
| Adjusting to individual differences | 1 |

## OVERALL RATING OF THE SOCIAL STUDIES PROGRAM

Teachers showed a general level of satisfaction with the program. Twenty-three (23) teachers indicated they were very satisfied with the program. Nine teachers repeated their concerns as to the lack of resources even though they were still happy with the program. Only three teachers indicated they were dissatisfied with the program.

## OBSERVATIONS AND DISCUSSION

While it is somewhat difficult to pull together general impressions from the teacher interviews, a few statements can be made.

Given that teachers expressed general satisfaction with the Social Studies program, it is of concern that they did not demonstrate that they or their students had a clear understanding of the concept of community. They also indicated that locating appropriate resources was a critical factor in selection of content and classroom practice and that this was especially critical in using the community approach to teaching Social Studies. A minority of teachers indicated that better resources would enable them to improve the grade 4 program.

Teachers indicated that the mapping unit was the most difficult part of the program to teach and that many of them spent a disproportionate amount of time doing so. Learning certain concepts conveyed by geographical terms also appeared as a problem for some students. From the information provided as to the strategies used to teach mapping skills and geographical terms, it is not at all clear that a wide variety of approaches are being used. Although it is impossible to draw definitive conclusions, teachers' descriptions of their teaching strategies tend to point to predominately teacher-centred approaches.

The analysis of the interviews tended to point to a need for clarification in the definition and development of research skills. The information gleaned from the interviews also demonstrates that teachers place significantly greater emphasis on knowledge and skill objectives than they do on attitudes and values and social participation objectives.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on the grade 4 teacher interviews.

1. **School divisions should ensure that all teachers are using the current grade 4 social studies curriculum.**

2. **Manitoba Education and Training and school divisions should collaborate to ensure that resources appropriate for the grade 4 curriculum are a readily available to teachers.**

3. **Manitoba Education and Training should strengthen the Curriculum Guide's rationale for the small scale community focus used in the study of world communities.**

4. **Teachers should work towards full implementation of the Curriculum Guide's small scale community focus as the vehicle for the study of world communities.**

5. **Manitoba Education and Training and school divisions both identify and develop resources that will assist teachers in implementing the Curriculum's small scale community focus.**

6. Manitoba Education and Training, in collaboration with teachers, should review the geographic terminology in the curriculum and make such adjustments as are necessary.

7. Manitoba Education and Training, in collaboration with teachers, should develop and disseminate models for engaging grade 4 students in research processes.

8. Manitoba Education and Training, in collaboration with teachers, should develop and disseminate models for engaging students in group processes.

9. Manitoba Education and Training should revise the Grade 4 Curriculum Guide so that it more clearly supports and demonstrates the teaching of map and research skills in the context of community studies rather than in separate units.

10. Manitoba Education and Training should provide guidelines that clearly limit the amount of time to be devoted to a separate mapping skills unit by those teachers who chose to teach these skills in isolation.

11. Manitoba Education and Training should identify and make available resources and teaching strategies/learning activities that will assist teachers in their efforts to deal with current events, world problems, stereotyping, and the development of empathy, in ways that are appropriate to grade 4 students and supportive of the goals of the Grade 4 Curriculum.

12. Manitoba Education and Training, in collaboration with teachers, should review and clarify the social participation objectives in the curriculum, and identify further examples of social participation activities that are appropriate for grade 4 students and supportive of the goals of the grade 4 curriculum.

13. Manitoba Education and Training, in collaboration with school divisions, should ensure that teachers are familiar with the recommended grade 4 text and that resources are available for teachers who choose to use this text.

14. Teachers should work toward placing a roughly equal emphasis on all four areas of objectives in the curriculum.

15. Manitoba Education and Training, school divisions, professional organizations, and universities should work together to provide professional development opportunities directed to the social studies needs of grade 4 teachers. Particular attention should be given to professional development related to implementing the Curriculum's small scale community focus, teaching toward all areas of the curriculum's objectives, teaching skills in the context of community studies, awareness of appropriate resources, use of varied teaching and evaluation strategies.

# CHAPTER 6

# Grade Four Student Observational Study

## PURPOSE OF THE OBSERVATIONAL STUDY

This component of the Assessment provided an opportunity to explore grade 4 students' understandings and perceptions of how people live in communities in other parts of the world.

As noted earlier in this report, the use of a written test to assess the grade 4 program had several limitations. Among these were the limited reading and writing skills of grade 4 students. In addition, however, the assessors were interested in being able to probe grade 4 students' understandings in more depth than was possible with paper and pencil test items.

In-depth exploration of students' understandings of the following goals and objectives were considered to be very important in assessing the impact of the grade 4 Social Studies curriculum on:

1. the further development of the concept of community through the study of communities in other parts of the world
2. the ability of the students to visualize world communities that they have studied and to verbalize about them
3. the development of awareness of current global issues
4. the growth of tolerance and empathy for people in other parts of the world
5. the ability to work and plan cooperatively in groups.

## THE OBSERVATIONAL STUDY

This part of the Assessment consisted of observing and questioning 30 groups of four students as they participated in a structured sequence of activities (described below). In addition, the thirty teachers from whose classrooms these groups of students were selected were interviewed. (The results of the teacher interviews are reported in Chapter 5.) Observation and questioning of students in groups was selected for several reasons.

1. It provided a situation which helped students overcome initial shyness and anxiety about being "tested" by strangers

2. It permitted the researchers to assess students' skill at group planning and cooperation

3. It permitted the researchers to focus on and explore the understandings that might be arising from use of the grade 4 curriculum. It was decided that a situation in which students could listen to and build on each others' ideas would give a better sense of these understandings than would interviewing individual students.

A stratified random sampling procedure was used to select 30 classrooms so that they would be representative of classrooms in the province. The schools were located in northern, rural and urban Manitoba. Once classrooms had been selected, four students in each of these classrooms, which had already been selected as part of the provincial sample for the written test, were also selected at random. (Two alternative students were also randomly selected in case of illness or unavailability of any of the first four.)

Six researchers and six research assistants were trained to use the assessment protocols (Appendix B) which were developed for this study. Each researcher and an assistant were assigned to five schools. A complete observation with one group of students took approximately one-two hours. All of the studies and interviews were conducted in the same week in June of 1989.

Because of the experimental nature of this observational study, it was not possible to obtain comments from the TAC in a manner consistent with the approach used for the written test and the teacher surveys.

## THE TASKS

Task 1:
The students were asked what a community was. The four students were encouraged to build on each others answers to provide as complete an answer as possible. Student responses were both taped and recorded on charts.

Task 2:
The students were asked to work together to develop a "model" community using a base "map", blocks and felt pens. This activity provided an opportunity to observe the students planning and working together cooperatively. It also enabled researchers to assess the students' understandings of the concept of community as the students made decisions about

what to include in their models. Students' conversations during this activity were taped and transcribed later. In addition, the research assistants recorded observations of the students' ability to work together. The researchers also made judgments about the ability of each group of students to plan and work together cooperatively. Inter-rater reliability is open to question but some determination of students' ability to plan and work together was made.

Once the model communities were completed the students were asked probing questions aimed at further exploring their understanding not only of the physical features of their model community but also of its social features.

Finally, students' understanding of the design of a community was probed by placing an element (a factory) into the environment to see if they understood the effect of this on their community design. Students were also questioned about the effect of their community on the natural environment. These conversations with the students were also taped and transcribed.

Task 3:
Task 3 was designed to explore students' understandings of the globe, and global issues. First, they were asked to locate a variety of places around the world and then they were asked about some current events around the world and their feelings about whether or not they could do anything about these world problems.

Research assistants recorded students' responses on charts during this task and the students' conversations with the researcher were taped and transcribed later.

Task 4:
The latter part of this study was intended to explore what students had been learning about a specific community that they had studied in their classroom during the year. Students were asked to select a community they had studied and tell what they remembered about the community. This information was recorded on a chart and on tape. Using a map, the students were also asked to locate the community.

The students were then asked to develop a model of the community they had studied (again using a base, blocks and felt pens). Their conversations were once again recorded and observations about their ability to plan and cooperate together were recorded.

A series of questions was then asked to probe the students' understandings of this world community and also to explore their attitudes and beliefs about people in other parts of the world.

## TASK ONE: STUDENTS' CONCEPT OF COMMUNITY

### Defining Community

The first task attempted to explore the students' concept of community in more depth than in the paper and pencil test. First they were asked to define the word "community". All of the responses were both transcribed and recorded on tape by a research assistant. Subsequently, these responses were coded using the categories of the paper and pencil test. Sometimes the group gave more than one example in the same category or examples that could be classified in more than one category. Table 6.1 below indicates the categories used and the response rate generated by the students.

Table 6.1

Student Definitions of Community by Response Category N=30 groups

| | Response Category | Percent Response Rate |
|---|---|---|
| A | Answers that state that a community is a place or a group of people. | 17% |
| B | Answers which imply that a community has interaction | 34% |
| C | Answers which imply that a community is a cultural entity | 3% |
| D | Answers which the students have learned in Science | 8% |
| E | All other answers were assigned to this category | 38% |

**Total number of student responses = 141**

It is clear that the concept of community which is foremost in the minds of this sample of grade 4 students is that of interaction (Category B), that is, students have indicated that a community is a place where people work or a place where they live and play. Only 3% of the students referred to the idea that a community is a cultural entity where the people have common language(s), attitudes, customs or values (Category C). The greatest percentage of all responses were in Category E which were judged to be answers which were not entirely appropriate. Included in this category were long lists of "things" which might appear in a community, for example, *"cars, houses, Burger Kings, trees,"* etc. Other responses in this category were definitions that were not accurate, for example, *"a community is a farmyard, a country, a community club"*. A third group of answers in this category was qualities and/or characteristics of communities such as *"it is a small area"*, *"it would be big"*, *"there are communities all over the world"*, *"some are richer than others"*, etc.

The findings of this activity correspond to those of the paper and pencil test which indicated that the concepts of community which grade 4 students express are fragmentary and incomplete. They seem to be unaware of the attributes of a community. This could be a reflection of the lack of support for teachers in establishing the criteria for this concept in the curriculum guides or a lack of understanding on the part of teachers of the critical attributes of "community".

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## TASK TWO: BUILDING A MODEL COMMUNITY

The second task required the students to develop a model community. Students were provided with a large piece of cardboard, felt pens and blocks. They were then asked to work together to make a model community which was the best one they could design.

This task was intended to provide information and insights into four aspects. The first aspect was the ability of a group of four students to work together, to share their knowledge and to make decisions cooperatively. The second aspect was to find out what features the students actually would place in a model community, where they would place them and how they would arrive at a decision to place them. The third aspect was to listen to the students' reasonings for their decisions. The final was to explore the students' ability to visualize a community.

During this task the students' conversations were taped and a research assistant kept notes on the students' interactions. The researcher also observed the students and evaluated their abilities to plan together and to work together cooperatively. These latter judgments were made on a 1-5 scale with 5 representing the best performance in these areas. Rater reliability in these areas is open to question because different researchers were used, ratings varied, and, therefore, no inter-rater reliability could be established.

### Group Processes; Planning and Cooperation

In analyzing the first aspect of the task, it can generally be stated that students did a minimum of planning prior to actually beginning the task. Very often students started to work on the side of the paper in front of them and moved into spaces where other children were working before they began to interact. Most often buildings were placed on the base, usually houses, and others were added. Streets were often not placed on the map until much later.

Discussion continued throughout the activity. During these discussions many comments were made and decisions taken to join roads, build a runway, or to provide more than one grocery store.

It should be noted that these suggestions and others such as: *"A hotel is not important for the people in the community, but it's important for people passing through."* and *"We need more stop signs, this is a busy street, we need parking places."* were provided by individual students and very often were acted upon by that child. In spite of this, however, there appeared to be some group agreement on what was appropriate even though this was not often verbalized.

Working cooperatively was more evident as students shared materials and worked politely and patiently to complete the task.

It is difficult to draw a hard and fast conclusion in this area of investigation because of the ambiguity of the data. It did not appear that students were used to working in this kind of hands-on, problem-solving type of task. They also did not seem to be used to planning together or discussing their ideas with their peers. They did, however, share equipment and respect ideas of the group members as occasions arose.

## Features of Model Communities

Table 6.2 below shows the features which students placed most often in their models. The percentage beside each feature indicates the percentage of the 30 groups of students which included this feature in their communities at least once.

**Table 6.2**

Frequency Distribution of Features Placed in Model Communities

| Feature | Percentage of the Thirty Groups Which Included the Feature |
|---|---|
| Houses | 97% |
| Bridges | 83* |
| Schools | 80 |
| Roads | 80 |
| Stores | 70 |
| Parks and playgrounds | 67 |
| Vegetation in the environment | 67 |
| Gas Stations | 57 |
| Police | 40 |
| Hospitals | 40 |
| Churches | 20 |
| Government | 10 |
| Hydro Electric | 7 |
| Water Supply | 3 |

*(This high percentage is no doubt due to the placement of a river on the base for the model.)

Table 6.3 is an attempt to categorize all the data from the thirty model communities. The figure beside each feature indicates the number of groups which included this feature in their community.

## Table 6.3

Frequency Distribution of Community Features by Category N=30

| Community Feature | Frequency Distribution | Community Feature | Frequency Distribution | Community Feature | Frequency Distribution |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Shelter | | Religious | | Farms | |
| Houses | 29 | Church | 6 | Barns | 4 |
| Apartments | 10 | Cemeteries | 3 | Elevators | 2 |
| Hotels | 7 | | | Crops | 3 |
| Motels | 1 | Other | | Silo | 1 |
| | | Vet | 2 | Pasture | 1 |
| Businesses | | Dog Pound | 1 | Tractor | 1 |
| Stores | 21 | | | | |
| Malls | 9 | Basic Services | | Factories | |
| Restaurants | 9 | Water Supply | 1 | (One of each of the following) | |
| Banks | 6 | Hydro Electric | 2 | | |
| Hairdresser | 2 | Garbage Dump | 1 | Cement | |
| Laundromat | 1 | Sewage | 0 | Tree | |
| Bar | 1 | Street Lights | 2 | Fish | |
| | | | | Creamery | |
| Transportation | | Social Group Agencies | | Milk | |
| Bridges | 25 | | 0 | Rendering | |
| Roads | 24 | | | Mill | |
| Gas Stations | 17 | Recreation | | Construction Sites | |
| Car Repairs | 2 | Playgrounds/Parks | 21 | | |
| Parking Lots | 4 | Campgrounds | 5 | | |
| Traffic Control | 3 | Swimming Pools | 14 | | |
| Overpass | 1 | Community Clubs | 7 | | |
| Railway | 8 | Baseball Diamonds | 2 | | |
| Bus Depot | 1 | | | | |
| Bus Stop | 1 | Communications | | | |
| Airport | 5 | Radio Stations | 2 | | |
| Docks | 3 | T. V. Stations | 0 | | |
| | | Post Office | 3 | | |
| Services | | Mailbox | 1 | | |
| Protection | | Newspaper | 0 | | |
| Police | 12 | Telephone | 0 | | |
| Fire | 11 | | | | |
| Block Parents | 1 | Environment | | | |
| | | Vegetation | 20 | | |
| Health | | Landforms | 10 | | |
| Hospitals | 12 | Lifeforms | 3 | | |
| Doctors | 2 | | | | |
| Nursing | 1 | Arena | 1 | | |
| Dentist | 1 | Golf Course | 1 | | |
| Old Folk's Home | 1 | Hunting Areas | 2 | | |
| | | Theatre | 2 | | |
| Education | | Fair | 1 | | |
| Schools | 24 | Bingo | 1 | | |
| Library | 6 | Fishing | 3 | | |
| Museums | 3 | | | | |

It may be worthy to note, at this point, that what the students excluded from their models of a community was as significant as what they included. Only one group, for example included a water supply for the community. Few groups included electricity sources, telephone links, sewage disposal, garbage dumps, satellite television relays, radio stations, newspaper offices, etc. It seems that these services are so taken for granted that they are

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not visible to students even when they live in communities where such features are not only visible but, in many instances, dominate the landscape of the community. It is also interesting to note that, with a few exceptions, students did not include those parts of the community which have to do with services which relate to government, laws, social services, etc. Again, as noted in the first aspect of this task, students did not seem to have a sense of community planning; they simply started to build and allowed the features they included to shape the pattern of the community. From the analysis of this aspect of the task, it was evident that this was not an activity that students had been involved in before.

One wonders how students, who are not aware of the features which are critical to the functioning of their own community, will have the background and understanding needed to study communities in other parts of the world. For example, in order to understand the importance of clean water supplies in third world communities one needs to know, at a minimum, about the source of water supply in one's own community.

### Rationale for Selection and Placement of Community Features

Once the students had developed their model community, they were asked a number of questions to probe further into their understanding of the concept of community. Students were asked specific questions about the community they had developed. These questions and the student responses to them are provided below.

The first set of questions asked the students to talk about the community they had constructed and to provide reasons for placing various features where they did.

Table 6.4 shows the reasons students gave for the placement of features in their model communities. Some groups gave more than one reason for the placement of features in the model communities. Two groups were not assessed on this question.

**Table 6.4**

Frequency of Reasons Cited for Placement of Features on Model Communities

| Reason for Placement | Number of Times Cited |
|---|---|
| Convenience | 23 |
| Provides Basic Needs | 5 |
| Environmental Reasons | 3 |
| Cultural Reasons | 2 |

In describing their model communities, students most often referred to utilitarian reasons for the inclusion and the location of features in their communities. As is evident in the above table, the most common reason given for the location of various features was convenience. Grade 4 students expressed concerns about the distances they would have to walk to school, to the Burger King, or to the store. They were concerned that the church should be located near the old folk's home, the fire station close to residential areas, and the fish factory close to the water.

While groups often did not provide reasons for the placement of various features, they generally realized that communities have to meet a variety of needs. For example, students made such comments as: There are ....*"houses .... where people can live, schools for people to learn, ....farms so people can grow their crops so people can have food, a drugstore so you can have medicine ....People can be very poor, here we made a laundromat so they can wash their clothes ....The firehall is here in case these houses catch fire. The police, hospital and school are close by the houses."*

Two groups mentioned environmental concerns at this point. One group talked about locating a fish factory away from the houses because of the smell and the pollution from the factory while another group talked about the importance of a windbreak in an agricultural setting. Yet another group indicated an awareness of cultural differences in a community in their comment, *"....yes, so we have more room for a playground; so the French and English don't fight; the French might not like the English."*

Some general observations can be made about student responses to the questions under discussion. The students often seemed to be looking at the model community from the perspective of how they themselves use a community. Understandably, the features which seem to come to their minds most often are those which are very visible to them, and when asked to expand on their answers about some feature of their communities they were able to provide many details. It is also worthwhile to note that when the students were asked to talk about their model community, they saw problems they had created and made adjustments to their model. For example, one group noted that they had not built a bridge when they talked about access to a park in their model.

When students were next asked what would happen if a factory were placed in the community at a spot close to homes, schools, etc., all 30 groups thought placing a factory in the community close to homes and school was a bad idea. Their main concerns were the effects on the people and the environment.

The effects on people, identified by students, were those related to noise levels, unpleasant odours, smoke and the subsequent damage to the health of people. They noted such things as *"people coughing"*, students *"...getting... hurt by traffic in the area"*, and *"people not wanting to walk outside because of the smoke"*.

The effects on the environment identified by students were those related to air pollution (acid rain), water pollution and the impact of these on plants and animals. Students were concerned that *"pollution in the river would ruin the community in the river"*, *"fish would die"*, that *"gardens wouldn't be very good"*, and that *"the smoke (would go) up in the air and form with the clouds to form acid rain"*.

Only three groups of students made any positive reference to putting a factory in a community. One group noted that it would depend on what kind of factory it was and added, *"if they were making things that didn't use a lot of stuff, or make lots of smoke, it would be okay."* A second group thought if the factory were making chocolate that would be a good thing. A third group thought if it were a bakery you could have it in the community.

When asked to decide on a better place for the factory, the solution was to place the factory on the edge of the community or outside the community. One group commented that *"There's always pollution no matter where you put one; even if it was over here (off the map), there would still be pollution."* No additional positive arguments were put forward for factories in their communities.

In reviewing the group discussions on these questions, it was obvious that students paid little attention to the ways people earned a living in their communities. They had many ideas about the damage a factory can do to the environment, some more realistic than others. Students did not seem to consider the positive side of a factory in a community (jobs, taxes to the community, etc.), particularly those which would not pollute the environment or those whose pollution could be controlled through a variety of means.

It can be stated from an analysis of this aspect of Task 2 that students can select and reasonably explain the location of some community features. They do this, however, without an outside structure or model, working instead from a very personal perspective. It would likely be advantageous to provide students with a framework which would enable them to focus on how the community supplies basic human needs and to help them understand the social structure and roles of social organizations in the community. By doing this students would be able to appreciate the need to provide an economic base for a community (a factory, perhaps) and not overlook the importance of less visible services such as water sources, electric power, and sewage and garbage disposal.

### Effects of the Community on the Environment

In order to assess how students viewed a community, researchers discussed with their respective groups the effects the community students had created would have on the environment, its best and worst features, whether or not they would be prepared to live in these communities, and their communities' positive and negative features.

Table 6.5 below summarizes the responses given by the student groups to changes caused by their communities on the environment.

### Table 6.5

Student Perception of Environmental Effects of the Creation of a New Community

| Environmental Effects of Building a New Community | N = 30 Group Responses |
|---|---|
| Positive Effects . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | 10 |
| Negative Effects . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | 2 |
| Both Positive and Negative Effects . . . . . . . . . . . . . | 18 |

When discussing the positive and negative changes brought about by their community, students talked about the community's effects on land, animals, and people. They noted that small animals that had lived in this environment would have been killed or driven away and that trees would have been chopped down. Many students thought building the community had affected the land positively because *"this was just a field, probably nobody used it.....finally it was used good (sic) because people could live on it"*.

In order to generate critical comments from the students, they were asked if they would like to live in the community they had developed, what they liked most about it, and what they liked least.

Twenty-six of the thirty groups thought they would like to live in the community they had created. Only one group thought they would not. Three groups were not asked to respond to this question.

Table 6.6 below provides an indication as to what students liked most and what they liked least in their respective communities. The table represents a categorization of all student comments provided by students in all groups.

### Table 6.6

Student-generated Responses for Most Liked and Least Liked Features of Their Communities

| Most Liked | Number of Times Cited | Least Liked | Number of Times Cited |
|---|---|---|---|
| Recreation | 20 | Noise | 5 |
| Friends | 10 | Factory | 5 |
| Schools | 7 | River (Danger) | 4 |
| Self-contained | 7 | Traffic | 3 |
| Shopping | 6 | Crowding | 3 |
| Protection | 4 | No school | 2 |
| Size/Location | 4 | Conflict | 1 |
| Own Creation | 4 | Lack of Plan | 1 |
| Quiet | 3 | | |

As can be seen from the above tabulation of responses, there were more positive than negative features mentioned about the communities created. Most of the negative features given were not surprising. Students talked about noise and air pollution from traffic and from airports and the factories they had placed in communities. The river was seen as dangerous to students who might be playing in parks beside the river or because of the swift current or flooding. One group had placed an English and a French school in its community, then saw this as a problem and reacted by saying, *"We don't need no (sic) Frenchies in this community."*

Students were finally asked to predict what would happen to the community in the future, and whether or not there was anything they wished to change about their community. Nineteen of the 30 groups presented, on balance, a positive outlook on the future, whereas 11 presented a rather negative view.

Table 6.7 provides a breakdown of the positive and negative views provided by students. Student groups were allowed to provide more than one positive or negative opinion.

Table 6.7

Student Views About the Future of Their Communities N=30

| Positive View | Number of Times Cited | Negative View | Number of Times Cited |
|---|---|---|---|
| More houses | 16 | Buildings torn down | 14 |
| More factories | 9 | Crowding | 4 |
| More people | 14 | Pollution | 3 |
| More to do | 9 | Closing of businesses | 4 |
| New inventions | 2 | Effect on environment | 4 |
| | | River | 2 |

Total Number of Responses for all Groups = 50

When given the opportunity to make changes to their communities, most groups simply added a few more features, said some features should be changed, or suggested that it should be made more orderly.

While it was obvious that students had little experience in this kind of task, it can be stated, generally, that students gave a fair accounting of themselves. They tended to be positive about the experience of building a community, were able to work in groups despite the fact that they lacked planning skills, selected many important features of a community but neglected others, were able to give reasons for selecting various community features, and were able to visualize the impact of a community both on itself and on the surrounding environment.

Students' understanding of "community" could be improved by the implementation of the recommendations mentioned in previous sections of this report.

## TASK THREE: USING THE GLOBE AND AWARENESS OF WORLD PROBLEMS

The third task required students to demonstrate their ability to use a globe. Table 6.8 below summarizes the knowledge demonstrated by the groups on the use of the globe.

Table 6.8

Knowledge of Globe Use by Grade 4 Students

| Item | Frequency of Group Response (N=30) |
|---|---|
| 1. Definition of the globe | 29 |
| 2. Reported use of globe in class | 29 |
| 3. Self-location on globe | 23 |
| 4. Identification and characteristics of the North Pole | 28 |
| 5. Identification and characteristics of the South Pole | 27 |
| 6. Identification and characteristics of the Equator | 29 |

It is obvious from the table above that most students are aware of and able to use the globe.

In an attempt to determine students' level of understanding of current world problems, researchers discussed the Alaskan oil spill and the famine in Ethiopia with the student groups. In both cases, students seemed to be aware of these global disasters.

In the case of the Alaskan oil spill, all 30 groups considered this to be a problem; in fact, 29 of the 30 groups considered it to be a serious problem. Most often the students described this accident as being harmful to fish and birds, and many groups identified this spill as being damaging to the food cycle.

When asked if they felt this spill would make a difference to their lives, seven groups gave ambivalent answers, 14 responded in the negative stating that they were too far away, that they did not eat fish anyway, or that this was just *"a lot of commotion in the news"*. The nine groups who stated it would make a difference felt this way because the spill would affect the food chain and because they felt sorry for the animals involved.

Not unexpectedly, of the 29 groups who responded, 18 felt they could not do anything about this situation for various reasons such as *"government wouldn't listen to kids,"* unless they were *"the Prime Minister's son or something"* or unless *"a miracle happened or you wished on a star"*. Ten groups, however, did feel they could do something about this and suggested checking ships before they went out to sea, sending money to buy bigger and better equipment, and helping to clean up if they (the students) were there.

One other group was undecided and one did not respond at all.

With respect to the problem of hunger in Ethiopia, students were told that thousands of people were dying; that this group of people could die out soon. They were then asked if this was a problem for them, if so, why, and whether or not they felt it was a serious problem.

Twenty-eight of the thirty groups thought that the situation in Ethiopia was not only a serious problem, but a very serious problem. Many of those who felt it was a serious problem focused on the fact that it was a problem to see people dying from hunger, that these people were suffering, and that this was the problem.

Other groups saw that the problem in Ethiopia could lead to the elimination of a dying population; that the African continent, or at least this part of it, could become a ghost continent.

When asked if the situation in Ethiopia would make a difference to their lives, 10 groups of students thought that it would while 15 groups did not think that it would make a difference. Two groups were undecided. Among those who thought it would make a difference to their lives some stated that they would be sad, sorry, disappointed, and frustrated because they had tried to help but that these people *"just die anyway"*. Three groups did not respond.

Among those who thought it wouldn't make a difference some felt that they were too far away - *"on the other side of the world"*, that it was inevitable, or that they could have handled it if they were there.

Twenty-seven of the groups thought they could do something about this problem. Twenty of the 27 groups thought that sending money would solve the problem. They were very aware of television programs such as World Vision and foster parent plans. Many of them spoke of providing this money through their churches.

Fourteen of the 27 groups thought they should send food directly. The students were aware of the fact that food could spoil and mentioned that they would have to send canned goods or powdered food. Four groups thought they should go there and either take food or grow it there for them. *"We could plant gardens for them"*. Finally, one group thought that flying in weekly supplies was the answer, another that technology was the answer, that we should *"give them stuff to farm so they can grow their own food"*.

It is obvious from this portion of the observational study that grade 4 students are knowledgeable about today's world. Students were very aware of the issues of pollution and world hunger and with respect to world hunger had a sense that it was possible for them to do something about it. Whether or not these fourth graders had come to this knowledge through the news media, through discussions in the family or in the classroom was not ascertained. In any case because of student interest in these areas, teachers should attempt to incorporate some study of these events into the Social Studies program, where appropriate. Teachers should also continue to encourage students to foster positive attitudes towards world problems.

## TASK FOUR: STUDENTS' UNDERSTANDING OF A WORLD COMMUNITY THAT THEY HAD STUDIED

### Part A: Preparing Students for the World Community Building Activity

### Selecting a Community

At this point students were asked what communities or countries they had studied in grade 4. In all, the groups named 120 countries/communities or an average of four studies per group. However, four groups provided the names of as many as 12 countries or communities which introduces the probability that a number of the reported studies were carried out by individuals and small groups rather than whole classes. The countries/communities that students reported studying and those that they subsequently selected to be questioned on are shown by world region in Table 6.9 below.

## Table 6.9

Global Distribution of Countries/Communities that Students Recalled Studying and Selected for Further Questions

| Community/Country studies recalled by groups (organized by global regions with frequencies in parentheses) | | | | Frequency of studies by region | Number of groups citing studies in each region | Number of groups making a selection for further questioning from each region |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Netherlands | (8) | Belgium | (1) | 24 (20%) | 13 | 3 (10%) |
| Switzerland | (5) | Poland | (1) | | | |
| Norway | (2) | Greece | (1) | | | |
| Spain | (2) | Finland | (1) | | | |
| Czechoslovakia | (1) | Ireland | (1) | | | |
| Austria | (1) | | | | | |
| New Zealand | (1) | Australia | (18) | 19 (16%) | 18 | 11 (37%) |
| Japan | (13) | Asia | (1) | 19 (16%) | 15 | 8 (27%) |
| China | (2) | Beijing | (1) | | | |
| Philippines | (1) | Hong Kong | (1) | | | |
| Zaire | (7) | Egypt | (4) | 19 (16%) | 13 | 3 (10%) |
| Nigeria | (3) | Cairo | (1) | | | |
| Ethiopia | (1) | Congo | (1) | | | |
| South Africa | (1) | Africa | (1) | | | |
| Mexico | (3) | Chile | (2) | 15 (13%) | 13 | 4 (13%) |
| Peru | (2) | Brazil | (1) | | | |
| Trinidad | (2) | Columbia | (1) | | | |
| Haiti | (1) | Jamaica | (1) | | | |
| Cuba | (1) | Manaus | (1) | | | |
| India | (5) | | | 5 (4%) | 5 | 1 (3%) |
| Middle East village | (1) | Israel | (1) | 2 (2%) | 2 | 0 |
| Canada | (6) | Thompson | (1) | 12 (10%) | 7 | 0 |
| Manitoba | (3) | California | (1) | | | |
| North America | (1) | | | | | |
| Communities named by type or function: | | | | | | |
| Inuit | (1) | Arctic | (1) | 5 (4%) | 4 | 0 |
| Desert | (1) | Jungle | (1) | | | |
| High Plateau | (1) | | | | | |
| Totals | | | | 120 studies | | 30 groups |

The grade 4 Social Studies curriculum suggests that communities be selected to show different world regions and variety within regions. With respect to the first criteria, coverage of different regions of the world, studies in Europe were cited most frequently (20% of the citations), while Australia/New Zealand, Asia and Africa received 16% of the citations each. Latin American studies were mentioned slightly less often with 13% of the citations, while India and the Middle East were both mentioned relatively infrequently.

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When the reported studies are looked at as a whole, they are, with a few omissions, representative of most of the major regions of the world. However, given that nearly all of the studies were identified by country names, it is impossible to tell to what degree variations in how people live within regions are being addressed. What is suggested is that countries continue to be the major organizer for the grade 4 program, a conclusion that is consistent with the findings of both the Teacher Interviews and the Teacher Survey.

Students' responses also provide some insight into patterns of topic selection within classrooms. In general, the groups mentioned studies in three world regions, although a few groups reported selections from as many as six regions, recalling the point mentioned above that an undetermined proportion of the reported studies were likely individual and small-group rather than whole-class efforts. Also indicative of some variety of regions within classrooms are the figures that show the number of groups citing one or more studies in each region. The five most frequently studied regions (Europe, Australia/New Zealand, Asia, Africa and Latin America) were mentioned most frequently by 13 to 18 of the 30 groups.

Once students had named all the countries and communities that they could remember studying and discussed which ones they found most interesting, they were asked to select one which would serve as the basis for further questions. The global distribution of these selections is shown in the right hand column of Table 6.9 above. Students' selections were clearly concentrated in two world regions, Australia/New Zealand and Asia, and further concentrated in two countries, Australia and Japan, within those regions.

The communities/countries that students recalled studying are quite similar in terms of range and frequency to those reported by teachers in the Teacher Survey. Obviously teachers' selections set the parameters for the students' subsequent selections. However, within these parameters students' selections appear to have favoured Australasia, and Australia and Japan in particular. To the extent that student groups responded to the directions that they select a country/community that they found interesting and that they would prefer to be questioned on, studies in this area of the globe appear to stand out for them. While factors affecting these student preferences were not investigated in this study, it seems likely that teacher interests and the availability of interesting support materials may have had an influence. Both of these considerations were cited by teachers in the Teacher Survey and the Teacher Interviews as very important in their topic selection decisions.

## Locating the Community

Once the groups of students had agreed upon a country or community, they were asked several questions related to its location. Their answers, which were assessed as either adequate or inadequate, are summarized in Table 6.10 below.

## Table 6.10

Summarized Responses for Locational Questions

| Question answer | Number of Student Groups N = 30* | |
|---|---|---|
| | Adequate | Inadequate answer |
| Location of selected community? | 27 | 2 |
| Name of continent that it is on? | 26 | 3 |
| Location of students' own community? | 30 | 0 |
| Kinds of transportation to get there? | 24 | 5 |
| Direction from own community and route of travel? | 16 | 13 |
| How far away is selected community? | 0 | 29 |
| How long would it take to get there? | 0 | 29 |

* In all questions except the one in which groups had to locate their own community, there were only 29 responses. The rest of the questions were not asked of one group which had not studied a common community.

The large majority of the groups of students encountered no difficulty in locating their selected community, in naming the continent that it is on, and in describing appropriate means of transportation for getting there. However, only slightly more than half were able to trace out likely routes of travel while correctly naming the compass direction of the routes. Finally, the answers of all of the groups suggest a very limited understanding of distance and travel time between their own community and their selected world community.

This latter finding points out the difficulty of distance and time on a global scale for students with the temporal and spatial abilities of most grade 4 students. While understanding distances and travel times are less important than many of the other objectives related to studying world communities, students could be assisted in beginning to develop these understandings through activities that use time and distance in their own environment.

### Knowledge of a Selected Community/Country

In preparation for having students develop a plan of a particular world community, they were asked to tell the observers what they knew about the community/country that they had selected. The groups showed considerable variation with respect to the number of identifiable ideas and pieces of information that they were able to provide. The responses by group ranged from a low of seven to a high of 26 with an average of 15. Student comments were recorded on a wall chart as they were offered. Table 6.11 below shows the categories that students' responses fell into and the frequency of responses for each category.

## Table 6.11

Ideas and Information Provided by Students about Communities According to Category

| Information category | Frequency |
|---|---|
| Needs (food, water, clothes, jobs, education) | 103 |
| Land, climate and life forms | 91 |
| Customs, beliefs, festivals, recreation | 84 |
| Political boundaries, capitals, historical information | 54 |
| Agricultural practices | 41 |
| Living conditions | 38 |
| People - physical characteristics, language | 24 |
| Total | 435 |

There was also considerable variation with respect to the complexity of their responses. The most frequent type of response consisted of isolated pieces of information such as, *"Its very hot,"* or, *"The hunting of kangaroos is a problem."* At times, one student's response would trigger a run of responses in the same category. For example if a kangaroo was named, it might be followed by the names of five or six other animals. However, some students provided more extended comments and attempted to get at relationships or problem situations.

The following are examples:

" - *Taking the trees creates problems. Animals are being destroyed before they are even discovered.*
- *It's a problem that they have too many people and not enough land. When they have land, it is staggered and in small patches - have to travel six or seven miles to your patch of land.*
- *Every meal God eats out of a special pot, and then they break them after every meal. God has to have the best. That's why potters have such a good job. They have to make so many pots."*

The predominant impression arising from students' answers to the general request that they share their knowledge about their selected community is that of a fragmented travel brochure. In a few cases groups were able to provide an impressive amount and range of information. Even less frequently, a group's response contained statements which indicated both recollection of specific knowledge and an understanding of relationships. For the most part, however, their responses suggested a rather basic and fragmentary picture of the country/community that they had selected.

Students in any grade vary widely in their development and the above differences in available knowledge and complexity of response are to some degree reflections of that variation. However, the relatively sophisticated answers of some of the students raise the possibility that there are others that could also understand and represent ideas in a like manner. Just as important as level of learner development may be the ways in which students are engaged in the study of world communities and the opportunities that they are given to learn about the lives of people in communities of a scale comparable to their own community.

## PART B: BUILDING A WORLD COMMUNITY

At this point students were given a large piece of blank cardboard, blocks, and felt pens along with instructions for making a plan of their selected world community. It was emphasized that students should take time to discuss what they wished to include in their representation and how they would lay it out. The entire planning and community re-creation activity was tape recorded and researchers limited their involvement to providing materials and encouragement and asking clarifying questions.

### Group Processes: Planning and Cooperation

As was the case with Task 2, this activity provided an opportunity to observe how students functioned in a group activity. In particular the researchers and research assistants attended to the following three aspects of how the groups of students carried out this activity; the extent to which students discussed what they should include in the community prior to recreating it, the extent to which they planned the layout of the community and what each of them was to do while they were engaged in the task, and the extent to which they cooperated during this process. Transcriptions of students' discussions and the written comments of the researchers and their assistants were used as the basis for rating each group. Ratings were based on a five-point scale with the low end of the scale indicating that a group process was exercised at a very low level. Performance on these three dimensions of the grade 4 Social Studies curriculum's social participation objectives is summarized in Table 6.12 below.

## Table 6.12

Ratings for Group Planning and Cooperation during World Community Building Activity

| Group process | IV** | Rating* Scale | Number of groups assigned each rating | Means for all groups |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Discussion of what to include in the community | 28 | 1 | 5 | |
| | | 2 | 9 | |
| | | 3 | 4 | 2.7 |
| | | 4 | 9 | |
| | | 5 | 1 | |
| Planning layout of community and group member tasks | 19 | 1 | 6 | |
| | | 2 | 5 | |
| | | 3 | 2 | 2.5 |
| | | 4 | 4 | |
| | | 5 | 2 | |
| Cooperation during community building | 28 | 1 | 6 | |
| | | 2 | 7 | |
| | | 3 | 2 | 2.9 |
| | | 4 | 9 | |
| | | 5 | 4 | |

* All three dimensions of group process were rated on a five-point scale with 1 on the scale indicating a very low level and 5 indicating a very high level.

** Where observers did not provide adequate comments, no judgments were made.

The overall means arising from rating these three aspects of social participation are all at or slightly above the midpoint on the five-point scale, suggesting a moderate level of performance. It was not an uncommon pattern for a group to discuss what they remembered about a community or country at some length and to be reasonably supportive of each other in recreating the community but to simply move from prediscussion to building with little or no planning.

There was considerable variation among groups with respect to the extent to which they discussed, planned and cooperated. One measure of this is the number of groups that received high and low ratings on each of these dimensions. Thus 10 groups were assigned a 4 or a 5 on prediscussion, 6 groups on planning, and 13 groups on cooperation. At the low end of the scale, 14 groups were assigned a 2 or a 1 on prediscussion, 11 on planning, and 13 on cooperation. Clearly there is a wide range of skill levels in these areas.

Prediscussion by groups was probably affected by at least two factors; the amount that they could recall about a community/country, and whether or not their studies had been based on a small-scale community focus such as was implied by the community building task before them. For those that had engaged in such small-scale studies, the prediscussion was fairly straightforward. For example, two groups, one of which had studied a small village in the Amazonian rainforest and the second which had studied a village on the Ganges River in India, made the following comments:

" - *Lets put in the huts - around in a circle with the chief's hut in the centre. There's cropland, a meat hanger (sic), an eating place, men's and women's huts. We'll save the trees, we'll draw them. And a garden and the Amazon River.*
- *Lets do India - a village on the Ganges River. Put it at the outskirts of town. There's a very small school, they have very low education. Don't start drawing, we have to talk. Do we need the Himalayas? No. Remember that picture? Its like a flea market - a whole bunch of houses attached together, lots of fields."*

In a few instances, however, groups whose finished product suggested fairly detailed knowledge about a particular community bypassed any initial discussion. It appeared as if they already knew what they wanted to include and did not see any point in discussion. For other groups it seemed they had little knowledge either about a particular community or about their selected country. Typical comments include the following:

- (Researcher comment)*"Didn't have many ideas - desert, island - but nothing else that is typical of Australia."*
- (Researcher comment)*"Kids were much more relaxed at end of session.* Didn't discuss. Very quiet." [Prompted them for ideas.] *"Tribes, places for fire, bushes."*
- (Researcher comment) *"Talked about houses being crowded, "squashed in", being on spikes. Said community would be near water, decided it would be Tokyo. Then started map."*

As mentioned above, on average, the groups were least successful at planning the layout of their community and assigning tasks. The following are sample comments from groups that had difficulty in this area:

- (Researcher comment) *"Very little to none at the beginning."*
- (Researcher comment)*"Not really - one girl giving orders at the beginning and then each student drew own item. No preplanning for placement."*
- (Researcher comment)*"Not really planned. All announce items and start drawing. Problems in organization immediately. e.g., What are you doing? That's not right!"*

Among those groups that did little or no preplanning, there were some that relied on what might be called in-process planning. That is, as problems with respect to the coherence of their community re-creation started to become apparent, they tried, with mixed success, to coordinate their individual activities. Thus, for example, one research assistant commented, *"More discussion as they worked - e.g., Whose going to do the barn? We need a shearing shed."*

Other groups were better able or more disposed to plan their community before beginning its re-creation. The following comments are typical:

- (Researcher comment)*" Good preplanning....listed items that they would want to include such as Ayer's Rock, hiking trail, cave homes in ground to keep cool, Aborigines. Discussed placement of Ayer's Rock amongst themselves. Chose something to draw. Would decide together on placement of item and colour."*
- (Researcher comment)*" Listed items and decided on their placement before drawing. Good. Instead of each person announcing what they were going to draw, it was a group effort. 'Count how many huts. Put in two more.' 'I didn't write it in. It was your job.'"*

With respect to the last of the three aspects of group processes, cooperation, performance ranged from silent individual activity to extensive mutual support. The following are three examples of researchers' comments about groups having difficulty in this area:

- *"Cooperation OK. One girl dominating the others. They ask her for permission. She would tell them what to draw."*
- *"Not a great deal of discussion. Work separately. Didn't share information or ideas."*
- *"Just watch each other. Didn't share ideas or suggestions. Work independently."*

Alternatively, other researchers made comments such as the following:

- *"Good. Checked item positions throughout task. Would think of an item someone could take on. Worked as a group - discussion, sharing ideas and suggestions."*
- *"Good cooperation. Good group work. Excellent discussions. Polite - sharing , enjoyed task."*

In summary, in almost all instances students approached the world community building activity willingly. At the same time, most groups engaged in very little planning prior to drawing and building. There was usually a brief discussion related to how broad or narrow to make the focus of the map and some discussion of what to include. However, by this point, work had usually started and students tended to pursue their particular concerns on the area of the paper that was closest to them. There were some exchanges during the activity with respect to what to include and where things should go. In a few instances, one student essentially took charge of the planning and guided much of the activity of the rest of the group. While students appeared to work together in a reasonably cooperative manner, with sharing of materials and mutual assistance in drawing features being quite common, there was only limited evidence of group planning.

## Items Included in World Community Re-creations

The specific content of the groups' drawings of their world communities were then analyzed in terms of particular items and features that were included. The types of things that groups included are displayed in Table 6.13 below.

### Table 6.13

Items Included in World Community Drawings N=27

Groups categorized by community focus

| | Cities | | | Particular small scale communities | | | | | | | | | Generic small scale communities | | | | | | | | Composites; no evident scale | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Items | 01 | 21 | 25 | 02 | 06 | 09 | 11 | 18 | 23 | 24 | 27 | 28 | 03 | 05 | 07 | 08 | 15 | 16 | 31 | 32 | 04 | 10 | 12 | 13 | 19 | 20 | 26 | totals |
| Homes | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | | * | 25 |
| Landforms | * | * | * | * | * | | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | | | 23 |
| Vegetation | * | | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | | * | * | * | * | | | * | * | * | * | * | * | | | 21 |
| Agricultr | * | * | | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | | * | * | * | * | | * | * | | | | * | 21 |
| Paths/rds | * | * | * | | * | | * | * | * | | | * | | * | | * | * | * | | * | | * | * | * | * | | * | 18 |
| Lifeforms | * | | | * | * | * | | * | * | * | | * | * | * | | | | * | | * | * | | * | * | * | * | | 17 |
| Cult/rlgn | * | | * | * | | | | | * | | | * | | * | | | | | * | * | | * | * | * | * | | * | 13 |
| Recreation | * | * | * | * | | | * | * | * | | | | * | | | | | * | | | | | * | * | * | | | 12 |
| Transp | * | | * | * | | * | | | | | * | | | * | | | | | * | | * | | * | | | | * | 10 |
| Stores | * | * | * | | | | | * | | * | | * | | * | | | | * | | | | * | | | | | * | 10 |
| Educatn | * | * | * | | | | | * | | | | | | | | | * | | | * | | | * | * | | | * | 9 |
| Govt | * | | * | | | | | | | * | | | | | | * | | | | * | | | | | | | * | 6 |
| Fishing | | | * | | | | | | | * | * | | | * | | | | | | | | | | * | | | | 5 |
| Industry | | | * | | | * | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | * | * | * | | | | 5 |
| Water | | | | * | | | | | * | | | * | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | * | 4 |
| Restrnt | * | | * | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | * | | | | | | | | | | 3 |
| T.V. | | | | | | | | * | | * | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 2 |
| Hospital | * | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | * | | | | | | | | | | 2 |
| Banks | | | * | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 |
| Groups | 01 | 21 | 25 | 02 | 06 | 09 | 11 | 18 | 23 | 24 | 27 | 28 | 03 | 05 | 07 | 08 | 15 | 16 | 31 | 32 | 04 | 10 | 12 | 13 | 19 | 20 | 26 | |
| Totals | 14 | 7 | 14 | 9 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 10 | 9 | 9 | 6 | 9 | 5 | 9 | 3 | 5 | 6 | 9 | 5 | 9 | 5 | 8 | 11 | 10 | 7 | 1 | 9 | |
| Mean no. of items by type of focus | | 11.7 | | | | | | | 7.8 | | | | | | | | 6.4 | | | | | | | | 8.7 | | | |

The results in Table 6.13 suggest considerable variation in the number and type of items that different groups included in their drawings. Part of this variation clearly reflects differences in the complexity of the communities that the groups selected. Thus those groups that recreated particular cities included evidence of the greatest range of items. Similarly, groups that drew a composite of a country's features were not limited by what might be in a small-scale community and thus tended to include a relatively high number of items. Of the two types of approaches to small-scale communities, those groups that recreated a particular community that they had studied tended to include more items than did those groups that portrayed a generic community.

There was also a marked variation in the extent to which different groups addressed the possible range of items that exist in their selected communities. There were some items that nearly all of the groups included in their world community re-creations. Included by 20 or more of the groups were homes, natural vegetation, landforms and agriculture. Nearly as frequently included were life forms and paths or roads. Recreational facilities and cultural features or landmarks were indicated by just less than half of the groups. Included relatively infrequently were items indicating education, means of transportation, and government. Even less frequently seen were items having to do with different means of transportation, communications, water supply, industry, and health services.

Even taking into account the limited possibilities that may have been presented by some of the groups' community selections, the forgoing analysis suggests a fairly shallow picture of community infrastructure on the part of most of the groups. However, there were also groups that appeared to have a quite extensive and particular knowledge about their selected community.

## Ability to Visualize a World Community

The community re-creation task also provided an opportunity to gain insight into the degree to which students could visualize a particular community and the life of its people. As shown in Table 6.13 above, students for the most part talked about their grade 4 studies and even the topic that they selected for further questioning by using the names of countries. However, when students had to actually represent a community on the piece of cardboard that was put before them, all but one group abandoned any notion of trying to depict a complete country. The nature of the task compelled groups to try to find a manageable focus, a step that was probably considerably more difficult for those groups whose studies focused exclusively on countries.

In order to assess the extent to which students' world community re-creations suggested an ability to visualize the communities that they had studied, the drawings were categorized and rated on a five-point scale with respect to two attributes, completeness and coherence. Completeness was defined as the extent to which a particular community re-creation encompassed a representative cross section of community functions and components. A group was assigned a two on the completeness scale for including items that addressed basic needs such as shelter, food, and transportation. Scores above or below two were determined by the variety of items in the community. Coherence was used to describe the extent to which these functions and components were put into a reasonable pattern and relationship. A community re-creation that demonstrated a functional order and was to some degree representative of the culture being portrayed was rated toward the high end of the scale. As stated above, taken together these criteria were intended to give a sense of the extent to which students could visualize a particular community. Ratings on these two variables are shown in Table 6.14 below along with the foci that students adopted in their community re-creations.

Table 6.14

Completeness and Coherence Ratings for Group Re-creations of Communities N = 28*

| | | | | Mean ratings by type of focus | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Focus | School group and community | Completeness | Coherence | Completeness | Coherence |
| City | 01 Tokyo (Japan) | 4 | 2 | 3.7 | 3.0 |
| | 21 Darwin (Australia) | 3 | 3 | | |
| | 25 Tokyo (Japan) | 4 | 4 | | |
| Small scale: particular community identified by name or function | 02 Blue Gums Ranch (Australia) | 4 | 3 | 2.9 | 2.8 |
| | 06 Outback farm (Australia) | 1 | 1 | | |
| | 09 Blue Gums Ranch (Australia) | 3 | 3 | | |
| | 11 Rice farming comm. (Japan) | 2 | 2 | | |
| | 18 Village from story (Tobago) | 3 | 3 | | |
| | 23 Blue Gums Ranch (Australia) | 4 | 3 | | |
| | 24 Village from story (Zaire) | 1 | 3 | | |
| | 27 Manaus (Brazil) | 4 | 4 | | |
| | 28 Ganges' village (India) | 4 | 3 | | |
| Small scale: a generic community | 03 (Japan) | 1 | 1 | 1.5 | 1.4 |
| | 05 (Japan) | 2 | 2 | | |
| | 07 (Congo) | 2 | 2 | | |
| | 08 (Japan) | 1 | 1 | | |
| | 15 (Switzerland) | 1 | 1 | | |
| | 16 (Japan) | 2 | 1 | | |
| | 31 (Japan) | 1 | 1 | | |
| | 32 (Trinidad) | 2 | 2 | | |
| Scale unclear: composite of various cultural and natural features of a country | 04 (Egypt) | 1 | 1 | 1.7 | 1.3 |
| | 10 (Australia) | 1 | 1 | | |
| | 12 (Switzerland) | 2 | 2 | | |
| | 13 (Australia) | 2 | 1 | | |
| | 19 (Australia) | 1 | 1 | | |
| | 20 (Australia) | 1 | 1 | | |
| | 26 (Australia) | 4 | 2 | | |
| Large scale: country | 17 Entire continent (Australia) | 1 | 1 | 1.0 | 1.0 |

* The students in groups 14 and 30 had not studied a common community so their community re-creations were not rated.

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The ratings of the groups' community re-creations suggests that the twelve groups that had a specific community or a specific type of community in mind, whether it was a city or a village, tended both to include a more representative cross section of community elements and display these elements in a more clearly interconnected pattern. That is, they gave evidence of being better able to visualize the community they were recreating.

The remaining 16 community re-creations fell into three categories. There were eight re-creations in which groups focused on small scale communities but did not identify them in any particular manner other than to say that they were communities in the country that they had studied. Another seven of the re-creations consisted of well known cultural features and landmarks from across a country gathered together in no evident spatial relationship. Finally, one group attempted to portray the whole of Australia and included only a minimum of information. The average ratings given to the re-creations in these three categories were, on average, clearly lower than was the case where students had a specific community or type of community in mind. In other words, those groups whose studies only let them recreate generic or composite communities appeared less able to visualize a particular community.

A further sense of how groups represented their world communities and the variation in these representations is provided by the following six examples. The first two are fairly typical of what have been referred to above as composite re-creations. That is, they are examples of instances in which groups were unable to depict a particular or representative small-scale community and thus resorted to portraying a collection of remembered features of a country.

(See photograph of group 31's re-creation in Appendix C)

This re-creation of Tokyo gives a clear example of a product that suggests minimal ability to visualize a community. It contains mountains, rice paddies, houses, a small motorized three-wheel truck and with no order that suggests a sense of what a community might look like.

(See photograph of group 4's re-creation in Appendix C)

The group that produced this re-creation clearly recalled a number of pieces of information about Egypt. Camels, palm trees, and cultural artifacts such as pyramids and sphinx's are liberally spread throughout. There is also evidence of understanding the broad pattern of river, farming and desert. However, the product is essentially a melange of items from various locations in Egypt with little evidence of a coherent vision of a particular community.

(See photograph of group 12's re-creation in Appendix C)

This re-creation is another example of a composite re-creation, albeit with an attempt to impose a community format. Thus their organization involving homes, a playground and some services. Also suggested is a relationship among the town, a farm and mountains. However, the conjunction of town, airport, farm and mountains lends an air of an artificial pulling together of the various aspects of Switzerland that the group had encountered in their study.

(See photograph of group 24's re-creation in Appendix C)

In this quite simple re-creation, the group gives a fairly clear sense of the organization of a particular community. The houses are set out in a circular compound and are depicted in a manner that gives some sense of their style and material of construction. The group also portrayed some specialization within the community and indicated, in a rather rough manner, the community's context. Interestingly, this example and the one that follows were both based on stories that the students had read. The sense of visualizing a particular community that is evident in both re-creations points to the importance of engaging students' imaginations through stories.

(See photograph of group 18's re-creation in Appendix C)

This re-creation, which like the forgoing example was based on a story, is interesting both for the sense of a particular community that it portrays and for some of its detail. The inclusion of what appear to be a television station and a newspaper company is unusual. Also unusual is the inclusion of a rich person's mansion as well as ordinary houses.

(See photograph of group 27's re-creation in Appendix C)

This example is the work of a group that had studied a particular small community in the Brazilian rainforest. While in some ways very simple and probably much like the community itself, this re-creation gives a sense of the physical organization of the community and its context as well as indicating some of the ways that people obtain food. It also points to social organization and status through a men's hut and a larger chief's hut.

(See photograph of group 25's re-creation in Appendix C)

This portrayal of Tokyo stands in stark contrast with the other Tokyo re-creation, number 31 above. While both groups, in choosing a city, had access to rich detail, only this latter group was successful in using it. Thus they included a number of features not in most other re-creations such as a bank, a car factory, bath houses, a representation of Buddha, and so on. Further, these and other items were portrayed in a manner that suggests a sense of layout and a fair degree of interrelationship.

In summary, analysis of the groups' world community re-creations suggests that the ability to visualize the context in which people live is assisted by having students study the lives of people in particular communities. It also suggests that stories may be an effective means of helping students obtain the mental images and the knowledge of detail that support visualization.

## PART C: PROBING STUDENTS' KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDINGS ABOUT A WORLD COMMUNITY

After students had completed their community re-creations, they were asked questions directed at their understandings of the community and the life of the people living in it. The questions focused on natural features, meeting needs, problems and how people deal with them, differences and similarities between their own lives and the lives of students in the community, the quality of life in the community, whether or not they would like to live in the community, and whether they thought that they would enjoy playing with students from the community. Students' answers to these questions are summarized and analyzed below.

### Understanding of the Context of a Selected World Community

Students were asked to describe what it was like around their community (e.g., land, climate, vegetation, etc.). This question was asked immediately after completion of the world community re-creations. It was intended to provide students an opportunity to explain the context of the community, much of which they might not have been able to include in their large scale drawing, and to provide researchers with an indicator of the students' ability to visualize that context. Students had their re-creations before them as they answered this and the balance of the follow-up questions.

In total, the 30 groups provided 152 pieces of information about the context of their communities. Group responses ranged from zero to 13 for an average of five facts per group. For most of the groups, the rather scant information that they provided suggests a limited picture of community context, although in fairness it should be mentioned that for some groups it may have been several months since they had studied their world community. However, approximately one fifth of the groups provided enough factual information to suggest a fairly complete picture of community context.

Most of this information was provided in the form of brief statements of isolated features. In a typical example, one group described the land with the following list: *"rocky, plant lots of things like fruit, lots of water around."* A smaller proportion of the groups tended to present their information in a more thematic form. For example, one group said, *"Really hot. There's lots of vegetation in here (pointing to map) - weeds, bush. It looks a lot better than the desert. It has some bush, its like the Carberry desert."* One group provided a more extended and complex response:

> *"Its rough, rainforest, very damp, dense, big trees trying to get up to the sun. They grow in three levels. It takes 200 years for the trees to grow that big and people go and cut them all down. In Canada, when they cut down trees, they have to plant new ones, but these are just cut down and they leave them. (Because they can grow back quickly?) No! It takes 200 years. We won't be around when its grown again."*

In the latter two examples above, students described some aspects of their selected world community in a manner that suggests they are to some degree able to visualize its context. One group made a comparison with a location that they know, the Carberry Desert, and the other group used descriptive language that draws a picture of rainforest tree cover. However, responses with such direct evidence of a strong visual image were a small minority. While other groups may have had an equally clear mental picture of their world community's context, their responses provided no evidence of this.

## Awareness of and Meeting Needs in a World Community

Researchers first asked students an open ended question on ways of meeting needs and then probed for further information. These probing questions were either directed at obtaining more detail and clarification about meeting a need that students had already raised or they asked about areas of needs that students had not mentioned on their own. Examination of the transcriptions of researcher questions and student responses indicates that there was considerable variation in the degree to which researchers prompted students to extend their responses. There were no probing questions raised with thirteen of the groups while with the remaining seventeen groups researchers asked from one to five such questions. This variation should be kept in mind in considering the following discussion of student responses. Some of the groups of students may have been able to provide more information on ways of meeting needs had they been asked probing questions.

**Areas of needs identified by groups.** Table 6.15 below contains information on the areas of needs that were raised by students, the frequency with which they were raised, and the degree to which each group of students was asked probing questions.

## Table 6.15

N = 30

Probing Questions and Areas of Need Identified by Groups

| | Areas of Need Identified by Groups | | | | | | | | | | | Frequency by Areas and Groups | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Group | Food | Shelter | Clothes | Water | Transport | Human support | Money | Work | Tools | Land | School | Probing quest./group | Areas per group |
| 01 | * | | | | | | | | | | | 0 | 1 |
| 02 | * | | * | * | | | | | | | | 3 | 3 |
| 03 | * | | | | | | | * | | * | | 0 | 3 |
| 04 | * | * | | * | | | | | | | | 2 | 3 |
| 05 | * | * | | | | | * | | | | | 2 | 3 |
| 06 | (incorrect information) | | | | | | | | | | | 0 | 0 |
| 07 | * | | | * | * | | | | | | | 2 | 3 |
| 08 | | * | | | * | | | | | | | 3 | 2 |
| 09 | * | | * | * | | * | | | | | | 0 | 4 |
| 10 | * | | | | | | | * | | | * | 0 | 3 |
| 11 | * | | | | | * | | | | | | 0 | 2 |
| 12 | * | | * | | | | | | | | | 0 | 2 |
| 13 | * | * | | | | | | | | | | 2 | 2 |
| 14 | * | | | * | | | | | | | | 0 | 2 |
| 15 | * | * | * | | | | | * | | | | 2 | 4 |
| 16 | | | | | * | * | | | | | | 0 | 2 |
| 17 | | * | * | | | | | | | | | 0 | 2 |
| 18 | | | | | | | | | | | | 0 | 0 |
| 19 | * | * | | | | | | | * | | | 5 | 3 |
| 20 | (no response) | | | | | | | | | | | 0 | 0 |
| 21 | * | * | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 2 |
| 23 | * | | * | | | | | | | | | 0 | 2 |
| 24 | * | | * | | | | | | | | | 0 | 2 |
| 25 | * | | | | | | * | | | | | 1 | 2 |
| 26 | * | * | | | | | | | | | | 2 | 2 |
| 27 | * | | | | | | | | * | | | 0 | 2 |
| 28 | | | | | | * | | | | | | 0 | 1 |
| 30 | | | | | * | | * | | | | | 4 | 2 |
| 31 | | * | * | | * | | | | | | | 1 | 3 |
| 32 | | | | | | | | | | | | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 20 | 10 | 8 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | | 62 |

When asked about meeting needs, students thought most frequently about meeting needs for food. This is indicated by the fact that 20 of the 30 groups mentioned this area, a figure which is twice the number that mentioned the next most frequent area of need, shelter. Next in order of frequency, clothing and transportation, were mentioned by eight and five groups respectively. Needs for human support, such as sharing and being a member of a group was mentioned by only four of the groups while the remaining areas of needs listed in Table 6.15 received even less frequent mention.

The pattern of students' responses suggests, first, that when the idea of needs is raised, they think primarily in terms of basic physical needs such as food and shelter. Even within this limited aspect of human needs, a number of groups raised only one or two areas.

Water, for example, was mentioned by only five of the groups. The second implication of the pattern of student responses arises from the infrequency with which they mention less physically obvious areas such as the need for love and human community (mentioned by four groups). Similarly, it should be noted that none of the groups discussed any aspect of meeting needs in areas related to rules, laws and governance. In general, the pattern of students' responses suggests a quite truncated perception of human needs.

**Meeting identified needs.** With respect to students' explanations about how needs are met in the various areas that they identified, the groups responses varied considerably. Four groups, rather than attempting such explanations, simply offered a list of types of needs such as, *"food, shelter, clothing."* Another nine groups provided explanations that were either incorrect or so cryptic that they might have applied to communities in any number of regions and cultures. One group's response about how people meet their needs in Australia provides a clear example of erroneous information:

> *"Kill animals for furs and eat them - skin them for blankets - like buffaloes (One student interjects, "Those are the Indians."). Sell furs, sea otters and bear skins. (Researcher - "In Australia?") "They could sell raccoons."*

An example of a cryptic response can be seen in the following very nonspecific explanation, *"They get some things from outside communities."*

As for the remaining seventeen groups, their explanations contained at least some relevant detail and in a few cases they included fairly extended accounts of how particular needs are met. For example, in talking about food, one group explained:

> *"They meet their needs by planting lots of rice. Fish farms - salmon, take out the eggs. Grow seaweed to eat - oysters, clams, prawns."*

This group did not, however, discuss any areas of needs other than food. Another group and one which discussed meeting needs in three areas, provides a further example of an extended explanation:

> *"For like building houses. There's lots of mud where they live. They go down to the river and they get some twigs and branches and carry mud from the river and carry it in buckets - and then bring it back to a spot and work on it. Its hand made."*

In summary, both the range of needs and the completeness of students' explanations regarding how needs are met suggest that most students have a truncated view of the spectrum of human needs and that they have difficulty providing specific detail about how people go about meeting their needs in the communities that they studied.

## Community Problems and Proposed Solutions

Students were next asked about problems in their selected community and how people deal with these problems. The types of problems that they identified are shown in Table 6.16 below.

### Table 6.16

Type of Problems Identified by Students N=30

| Problems total | Number of times cited | % of citings |
|---|---|---|
| Weather/Climate<br>e.g., - Its hot in the desert.<br>- They had a bad year of drought.<br>- Its very, very dry.<br>- They have hurricanes. | 18 | (29%) |
| Dangers/Natural disasters<br>e.g., - snakes, insects, tigers, etc.<br>- volcanoes, avalanches, tidal waves, etc. | 14 | (23%) |
| Food/Agriculture<br>e.g., - They might not have very fresh milk.<br>- Wild animals eat the land of the farmer's sheep.<br>- They need more farm land. | 9 | (15%) |
| Environmental problems<br>e.g., - Trees are being cut down.<br>- The greenhouse effect is making it hot.<br>- Factories - kill flowers. | 4 | (6%) |
| Health care and disease<br>e.g., - No doctors. They need more medicine.<br>- Tsetse fly bites.<br>- They still have radiation. Lots of people have died. | 4 | (6%) |
| Lack of technology<br>e.g., - No telephones, they use drums.<br>- Not mechanical, they still use an ox.<br>- Machinery breaking down (and difficult for them to repair it). | 4 | (6%) |
| Overcrowding<br>e.g., - Because of the population they can get squished at soccer games.<br>- They're overcrowded - too many people. | 3 | (5%) |
| Transportation<br>e.g., - Not very many roads.<br>- Travelling to your rented field. | 3 | (5%) |
| Shelter<br>e.g.,- Shelter - its really not too modern.<br>- Houses are so small and crowded. | 2 | (3%) |
| Racism/Discrimination<br>e.g., - Whites on the bus call them bad names. If an Aborigine takes a job in the city, they don't get as good an amount. They don't get all their land. The whites are already breaking into the Aboriginal reserves. | 1 | (2%) |
| Total number of problems identified | 62 | |

*Some groups identified more than one problem.

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Problems having to do with climate, natural disasters and obtaining food made up 66% of the problems identified by students. Others, including environmental problems, health care and racism, were mentioned much less frequently.

In identifying problems most groups simply named the issue in a short sentence. However, there were two interesting exceptions. One group provided an extended description of discrimination based on race (see Table 6.16 above) while another group described at some length the difficulties that sheep ranchers in Australia have with wild animals.

The next question asked students how people deal with the problems that they identified. For reasons that are unclear, this question was not asked of nine of the 30 groups, while another three groups that were asked made no responses. The responses of the remaining 19 groups are summarized in Table 6.17 below.

Table 6.17

Explanations about How People Deal with Problems N = 19

Weather/Climate
e.g., - They dig a little path and water flows in. (irrigation)
- They store water in a reservoir.
- They have wells. They don't throw away water - very wise with their water. They use irrigation.

Dangers/Natural disasters
e.g., - They can't do anything (about volcanoes, etc.)
- They shoot down the avalanches.
- They wear runners (against bugs, etc.)
- Shoot tigers and cut them in half.

Food/Agriculture
e.g., - Trade tobacco for food.
- They can take the path and go to the store and get more seeds.
- They spray the sheep.
- Farmers help each other.

Racism/Discrimination
e.g., - They can't do anything about it.

For the most part, students provided straight-forward and brief descriptions of technical solutions for the problems that they had identified. For example, as shown in Table 6.17, they described water conservation as a response to drought or simple acts such as wearing runners to avoid insects. In a few cases students indicated that little or nothing could be done about natural disasters, suggesting that they were thinking in terms of ways to prevent or avoid problems rather than how to deal with them.

In a few instances, groups provided more elaborate descriptions, such as in the case of the group whose answer about water conservation is shown in Table 6.17 above. Another group explained at considerable length the difficult choice between conservation and species extinction that farmers face as they try to protect their range land from "pests". Interestingly, three of the five groups that made the more complex and extended comments were also groups that had studied specific communities. While this is too small a group to generalize from, the possibility that the intense study of a particular community might lead to more complex understandings than are likely to arise from the more diffuse study of large regions and countries is an idea worth further exploration.

Finally, three groups thought that little or nothing could be done about the problems they had described. The group that provided the relatively detailed account of discrimination against Aborigines that is shown in the above table went on to say, simply, *"(They) can't do anything about it."* Another group, after identifying seven problems related to agriculture in a community, went on to say:

> *"They survive - they help each other. It doesn't really bug them. They're used to having these problems. They don't want to change. Its hard to change."*

A third group, after naming several problems facing people living in a rainforest community, said:

> *"They're kind of isolated in the middle of the rainforest. They don't know what's going on around them. If they see a plane go over, they worship it."*

In summary, several points can be made about students' identification of problems and their explanations regarding how people address these problems. First, students' level of awareness of problems in the communities that they studied seems, for the most part, fairly superficial and limited to readily observable physical phenomena such as climate and natural disasters. Some important areas such as environmental problems and racism were mentioned relatively infrequently. Given that a few groups had fairly detailed accounts of the latter sorts of problems, their relative infrequency does not appear to be because they are too difficult for many grade 4 students to comprehend, at least in some basic manner. Further, the large majority of the grade 4 teachers who responded to the Teacher Survey indicated that these sorts of environmental and social problems should be included in grade 4 community studies. Possibly this low frequency arises from a lack of appropriate materials that are readily available to teachers. It may also be the case that some teachers regard these sorts of issues as controversial or in some way inappropriate for their students.

Second, to reinforce a point alluded to above, the descriptions and explanations provided by a few of the groups demonstrate that at least some grade 4 students can understand and give a reasonably sophisticated account of the social and environmental problems that exist in the communities that they study. Given an opportunity, it is likely that most students of this age would show an interest in such issues and be able to understand them.

## Differences and Similarities in the Way People Live in Different Parts of the World

After each group of students had discussed problems in their selected community, they were asked to indicate ways in which the lives of students living in this community were different from and the same as their own lives. A summarization of students' responses is presented in Table 6.18 below.

Table 6.18

N = 30

Students' Examples of Differences and Similarities between
Life in a World Community and Life in Their Own Community

| | Number of examples in each category | |
|---|---|---|
| Student examples by category | Differences | Similarities |
| Differences/similarities with respect to: | | |
| Meeting needs; | | |
| - Schooling | 32 | 13 |
| - Play/recreation | 20 | 12 |
| - Work | 15 | 2 |
| - Food/agriculture | 11 | 18 |
| - Transportation | 6 | 4 |
| - Safety | 4 | 1 |
| - Clothing | 4 | 2 |
| - Shelter | 3 | 7 |
| - Religion | 1 | 1 |
| - Health | 1 | 1 |
| - Social/emotional | 1 | 9 |
| Natural environment | 7 | 4 |
| Basic humanness | | 2 |
| Standard of living | 11 | 1 |
| Total | 116 | 77 |

The groups cited anywhere from one to 12 differences for a total of 116 examples and a mean of 3.9 per group. The corresponding numbers for similarities ranged from one to seven responses for a total of 77 and a mean of 2.6 per group.

Of the examples of differences and similarities that students provided, the large majority were related to how people meet their basic needs. Of these, the most commonly commented on areas of needs were schooling, play and recreation, and food. The following are typical examples:

*Food differences:*
- *They don't eat the same foods*
- *Their don't have as much food.*
- *They grow most of their food.*

*Schooling differences:*
- *They don't get a good education.*
- *While we are in school, they work.*
- *They have to wear uniforms.*

*Play/recreation differences:*
- *They can go for a swim anytime.*
- *They don't have T.V.s.*
- *They only have home made toys.*

*Food similarities:*
- *They eat the same kinds of food.*
- *They have gardens. (farms, etc.)*
- *They have grocery stores.*

*Schooling similarities:*
- *They go to school like us.*

*Play/recreation similarities:*
- *They play sports like us.*
- *They have fun like us.*
- *They have playgrounds.*

Another category, work, was cited more frequently with respect to differences in students' lives. Thus, in talking about differences, 15 of the groups commented that students living in the world community that they had selected work much harder than they do. Less frequently cited were similarities in areas such as shelter, transportation, clothing, and religion while some areas of needs such as water and communications received no mention. Given the variety of communities that groups were using as the bases for their comments, it is not clear whether these low or zero frequencies arise from students overlooking these areas or from a perception that there are no similarities in these areas. However, analysis of students' products in Task 2, in which they were asked to design an ideal community, suggest that in the large majority of cases students did not include aspects of community infrastructure that were less readily observable. Thus they tended to exclude, for example, communications, water and sewage systems. This suggests that these are aspects of community that need to be addressed, both in studies of students' own communities and in their studies of world communities.

Nearly all of the total of 193 statements of similarities and differences were very brief. Students simply identified an aspect of students' lives in which they thought there was a difference or a similarity. Typically, they said things such as, *"They work harder than us."*, or, *"They have cars too."* In a few instances slightly longer explanations were offered. For example, one student commented that, *"All they have is animals. They have to make their own toys out of garbage or trees."*, while another observed that, *"They don't believe in the same god as we do. They believe in Buddha, Christianity, Hinduism, Shintoism."* However, answers containing relationships or an extended sequence of information were very few in number. Of the 193 responses, 40% dealt with similarities while 60% were related to differences. These results suggest that students retain more information about differences then they do about similarities when studying other cultures. There are at least two possible objections to this interpretation. First, it might be argued that there were more statements of difference because students were asked about differences first and that once they had named 116 differences, they had less energy or inclination to consider similarities. However, it is just as likely that considering difference reminded students of various aspects of the lives of students in their selected communities and thus served as a primer for considering similarities. Second, it might at first glance appear that there are simply more differences than similarities and that student responses are a simple reflection of this situation. In reality, students' answers tended to sum a myriad of possible similarities by global statements such as, *"We all do chores."* However, when talking about differences in work, they were more likely to identify particular ways in which others work harder than they do.

This predominance of difference statements over similarity statements is in accord with the arguments of some developmental psychologists, e.g., David Elkind (1982), which suggest that similarities are more difficult to perceive and that it is differences which stand out and make the strongest impression. It may also be fostered by an understandable teacher reliance on 'strange and exotic' pieces of information to attract the attention and interest of students. However, this imbalance points to the need for more attention to underlying similarities, both because the appreciation of such similarities is assumed in the grade 4 curriculum to be related to the development of empathy for and understanding of people with different cultural backgrounds, and because, as is suggested in the following paragraph, the consideration of similarities appears to encourage some important thinking processes.

With respect to thinking processes, nearly all of the students' statements of both similarities and differences consisted of statements about observable material objects, behaviours or conditions. For example, they said such things as, *"They are poor."*, or, *"They have gardens too."* However, in the case of similarities, there was a slight but noticeable tendency toward thinking about underlying and less tangible matters. On the simplest level, students in nine groups referred to friends, neighbours, parents, and community. For example, they observed that:

- *They are both communities.*
- *They have friends. (neighbours, parents)*
- *They have parents and get yelled at the same as us.*

In a more basic manner, students in two groups referred to the basic humanness of all people:

- *They're kids, they're human.*
- *They are people.*

Interestingly, not one student in any group directly addressed commonalties in feelings such as hopes, fears, and happiness. However, these responses suggest a degree of analysis and synthesis in thinking about communities in other cultures. They also suggest some degree of identification with the people in the communities that were studied. It is quite possible that similarities, by their very nature as underlying characteristics and qualities, provide valuable opportunities for engaging students in more complex thinking skills and for encouraging the development of empathy.

A final observation about students' statements is that while all similarities were stated in terms that suggested that the speaker was either making a positive comment or neutral observation, approximately 60% of those comments related to differences had a negative tone. That is, they identified some aspect of life in a world community that students perceived as undesirable. Clearly this difference is in part related to real differences in material standards of living that exist between students' own communities and some of the world communities that they selected. However, it is also likely that some students are equating differences with an inferior quality of life. Students' responses to some of the items in the written portion of the Assessment (See Chapter 3 subsections on Culturally Different Communities and Similarity of Human Needs) underlined the same possibility. Taken together, these results point to the importance of studies that are rich enough in detail about people's daily lives and their shared human qualities that they encourage the development of the appreciation of underlying similarities and of empathy.

When students stopped citing differences and similarities, they were in each instance asked to explain why these differences or similarities existed. Their responses are shown by category in Tables 6.19 and 6.20 below.

## Table 6.19

Students' Reasons for the Existence of Differences Between the Way of Life in Their Own Communities and in a World Community

N = 20*

| Reasons by category | Number of Times Cited |
|---|---|
| Differences explained in terms of: | |
| Specific situation in which people live.<br>e.g. - They haven't the same stuff as us, so the don't build things like us.<br>- They're in a jungle and we live in a community.<br>- Because its a different environment. That's where God put them. They have to be different or they will die. | 18 |
| General situation in which people live.<br>e.g. - Its just a whole different country.<br>- Different side of the world - different continent. | 10 |
| The influence of technology.<br>e.g. - Because we have more modern stuff. | 5 |
| Culture.<br>e.g. - Parents want students to live like their ancestors.<br>- Because they have legends.<br>- Because they're Japanese. They're close to China where people speak a different language. | 5 |
| Poverty.<br>e.g. - Their parents don't have much money. | 2 |
| Total reasons for differences | 40 |

* This question was not asked of 7 groups and another 3 groups did not respond.

## Table 6.20

Students' Reasons for the Existence of Similarities Between the Way of Life in Their Own Communities and in a World Community

N = 8*

| Number of Reasons by category | Times Cited |
|---|---|
| Similarities explained in terms of: | |
| People's shared human characteristics and situation.<br>e.g. - They're human. We are all human. We are differently made but we all think the same.<br>- We need oxygen, water.<br>- We are all in the same world, the universe.<br>- God made them like that because they are humans.<br>- God gave them a brain to use, to grow their food. | 6 |
| Trade.<br>e.g. - Because they export things and other countries might give them the same stuff (as is in the students' own community).<br>- They get some of their technology from Canada. They do a lot of trading. | 2 |
| Total reasons for similarities | 8 |

* This question was not asked of 20 groups and another 2 did not respond.

These two questions dealing with reasons for the existence of differences and similarities were omitted by the researchers fairly frequently. With respect to differences, seven groups were omitted, while the corresponding number for similarities was 20. While most researchers missed an occasional question, this rate of omission is exceptional and suggests that there was something about the nature of students' responses that led some researchers to bypass these 'why' questions after they had worked with their first one or two groups. Not infrequently, when students were asked why differences exist, they offered more differences. It was also fairly common for them to provide very general and, at first glance, tautological answers such as, *"Because its a different country."* Answers like these might have convinced some researchers that these questions were too difficult or at least unproductive and best omitted. Whatever the bases of their decisions, these omissions are unfortunate since a close examination of the explanations offered by those groups that were questioned provides interesting insights into how students' deal with complex causal questions.

Of the 23 groups that were asked to provide reasons for the differences they had identified, three did not give any response. The answers of the remaining twenty groups fell into five categories. The first two categories, which made up 70% of the responses, involved some manner of environmental determinism. Most common (cited 18 times) were answers which called on some specific form of environmental determinism. Here students cited the nature of the environment that people live in and, either directly or by implication, the effects that the environment has on how they live. Next in order of frequency were answers based on global observations to the effect that the differences arise from the fact that people live in another country, on the other side of the world, and so on. These answers, which, as suggested above, may have struck those asking the questions as tautological, appear on closer inspection to be simply more general and less articulate instances of environmental determinism. The balance of students' explanations suggested that differences were caused by people having different technologies and different cultures (each cited 5 times) and by lower incomes (cited twice).

Of the 10 groups that were asked why the similarities that they cited between their own community and their selected world community existed, one did not respond and another simply cited another similarity. The answers of the remaining eight groups fell into two categories. Two groups explained similarities by saying that through trade the people in their selected world community gained access to some of the things that are in their own communities. The other six groups attempted more global and fundamental explanations directed at shared underlying human qualities.

In summary, most of the explanations that students offered for the existence of differences and similarities indicate the beginning of an ability to grapple with abstract causal questions and to search for causal connections. Clearly some of the responses have a circular quality but this may have disappeared had the researchers probed into the meaning behind the students' more global answers. The answers of the groups that had an opportunity to answer these "why" questions point to considerable sophistication in thinking about such abstract matters and suggest that these sorts of questions provide an important opportunity for students to exercise important thinking processes.

## Quality-of-Life Judgements

After students had explained the ways in which the lives of students living in the community they had constructed were similar to and different from their own lives, they were asked if these students had a good life and if they would like to live in the community. Their responses are summarized in Table 6.21 below.

Table 6.21

Response Rate and Frequency Distribution of Quality-of-Life Judgements of Grade 4 Students N = 30

| Question | Yes | No | Group undecided | No response |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Do they have a good life? | 18<br>(60%) | 7<br>(23%) | 4<br>(13%) | 1<br>(3%) |
| Would you want to live there? | 7<br>(23%) | 11<br>(37%) | 5<br>(17%) | 7<br>(23%) |

The results in Table 6.21 indicate that the majority (60%) of the 30 school groups arrived at the conclusion that the people in the community that they chose to talk about have a good life and only 23% concluded that they did not have a good life. However, when asked if they would like to live in the community, only 23% of the groups said yes while 37% said no.

After the groups had answered each of the above questions, they were asked to provide reasons for their answers. Their responses are summarized in Table 6.22 below.

## Table 6.22

Response Rate and Frequency Distribution of Reasons for Quality-of-Life Judgements of Grade 4 Students

| | Do they have a good life? N = 25 | | Would you like to live there? N = 18 | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Reasons for judgement | Yes | No | Yes | No | Number of Times Cited | % of Total Citings |
| Extent to which there are opportunities for play and recreation | 10 | 5 | 10 | 10 | 35 | (29%) |
| Degree to which needs are met | 11 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 32 | (26%) |
| Degree of safety and security | 4 | 5 | 0 | 6 | 15 | (12%) |
| Degree of physical comfort | 0 | 0 | 1 | 9 | 10 | (8%) |
| Degree of difference | 0 | 0 | 2 | 8 | 10 | (8%) |
| Prefer it here/there | 0 | 0 | 1 | 7 | 8 | (7%) |
| Its what they are used to | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | (5%) |
| Communication/ language problems | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 | (2%) |
| Degree of freedom | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | (2%) |
| Totals | 32 | 13 | 17 | 49 | 121 | |

The two criteria most commonly used by students for making judgments about the quality of life in a community and whether they would want to live there were the degree to which there are opportunities for play and recreation and the extent to which basic needs are met. Also important but used only about half as often (12%) was the extent to which students saw a community as being a safe place to live. Reasons relating to physical comfort and differences in communities were each cited 8% of the time. A general preference to being at home and it being what they were used to, were cited 7% and 5% of the time. Communication problems because of language differences and perceived freedom within selected communities were each cited 2% of the time.

Comments representative of student responses in the more frequent response categories are listed in Appendix D.

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In summary, there are at least two conclusions that can be drawn from students' views on the quality of life in their selected communities. The most obvious is that having opportunities to play and having basic needs met appear to be students' primary concerns in quality of life judgments. These and the other considerations mentioned by students are probably useful dimensions to build into any study of a world community. It would seem that students are interested in information about these matters and that detailed study of the life of people in specific communities is an appropriate way to help them gain this information.

It is also apparent that some students are beginning to engage in cultural perspective taking. Those students who said things like, *"Its what they are used to."*, in response to the query about whether or not students in their selected community have a good life may have been making an essentially negative observation. That is, they may have been saying, in effect, "They don't know what they are missing." However, this type of response does suggest that some of the students are able to appreciate the idea that the context in which one lives to a large extent shapes one's views and preferences. Such an understanding is an integral part of studying the lives of people in other cultures and its presence in however an embryonic form in grade 4 students suggests that they may benefit from activities that encourage perspective taking. Stories about students in other cultures are an especially effective tool in this regard.

## Interaction with a Child from a World Community

The final group of questions that was put to students focused on how they thought it would be to play with a child from the community that they had studied. These questions were intended to address a common issue from slightly different perspectives. The first question used each group's selected world community as the location and asked whether they would enjoy playing with the children who live there and whether those children would enjoy playing with them. The follow-up question asked whether or not the students would enjoy playing with a child from this same community if he or she came to their own community. By addressing the same issue in a different context, these questions provided an opportunity to see if students' concerns about being in a cultural context different from their own would influence their views. In both questions students were asked to provide reasons for their answers.

The groups' indications of whether or not they would enjoy playing with students from their world communities under the two circumstances discussed above are summarized in Table 6.23 below.

### Table 6.23

Response Rates and Frequency Distribution of Grade 4 Students' Interaction with Children from Their Selected World Community

N = 30

| Question | Yes | No | Undecided | Not asked |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| If you went to __________, do you think that you would enjoy playing with the children there? | 13<br>(43%) | 8<br>(27%) | 9<br>(30%) | 0 |
| Would they enjoy playing with you? | 8<br>(27%) | 4<br>13%) | 10<br>(33%) | 8<br>(27%) |
| If a child from _________ came to your community, would you enjoy playing with him or her? | 20<br>(67%) | 2<br>(7%) | 8<br>(27%) | 0 |

The views of students in some groups were clearly unanimous and the groups expressed no difficulty in deciding whether or not they would enjoy playing in the circumstances presented to them. There were other groups, however, in which there were mixed views or in which views appeared to change as students listened to each other. In these cases a judgement was made based on the balance of opinion indicated by all the comments of the students in a group. Where there was a sizable minority opinion, a group's response was rated as being undecided.

When the setting was the world community, 13 or 43% of the groups concluded that they would enjoy playing with the students there, while 17 or 57% of the groups indicated they were either undecided (nine groups) or that they would not enjoy such play (eight groups). Thus, less than half of the thirty groups indicated that they thought it would be enjoyable to play with students from the world community that they had studied if the playing were to take place in these students' communities.

Using the same world community location but shifting the focus of the question to how the students living there might feel about playing with them, did not appear to alter the groups responses a great deal. However, the fact that this particular question was omitted by eight researchers makes a comparison difficult. As will be seen below in the discussion of the sorts of reasons that were offered by students, there were at least a few instances in which the change of focus to the other students' feelings did appear to make a difference. That is, a few groups that had indicated that they would enjoy playing also expressed the view that the other students might envy or resent them for their standard of living and thus not enjoy playing with them.

When students were asked to imagine that a child from their selected world community had moved to their own communities, a considerably higher 20 groups (67%) said that they would enjoy playing with him or her under this circumstance, while only 10 (34%) of the groups indicated they were either undecided (eight groups) or that they would not enjoy such play (two groups).

The patterns of each of the groups' decisions on the three questions provide some insight into factors that may have affected students' feelings about playing with the students in their selected world community. When the 28 communities[1] are grouped according to the likelihood that students would have perceived them as having either a high or a low degree of cultural/racial difference when compared to their own communities, there are 15 communities that would likely have been perceived as having a high degree of difference and 13 that might have been seen as having a low degree of difference. Using this characterization of the communities as a base, the following patterns emerge:

1. Of the 13 groups that thought play would be enjoyable if it took place in the world community, nine had selected communities with a low degree of difference while four had selected communities with a high degree of difference.
2. Of the 15 groups that were either unsure or thought that play would not be enjoyable if it took place in the world community, 11 had selected communities with a high degree of difference while four had selected communities with a low degree of difference.
3. Of the 10 groups that changed from "no" or "undecided" to "yes" when the location of play was changed from the world communities to their own communities, seven made this decision in relationship to world communities with a high degree of difference.

These patterns suggest that students are concerned about marked cultural/racial differences when considering whether or not they would enjoy playing with other students and that these concerns are reduced when the location of play changes to their own communities.

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[1] While 30 groups of students were observed, only 28 groups were able to identify a world community that they had studied together. The two groups that had not studied a common community were omitted from this analysis.

The reasons offered by students for the foregoing views are summarized in Table 6.24 below.

Table 6.24

Response Rates and Frequency Distribution of Reasons Given by Grade 4 Students for Interaction with Children from Their Selected World Communities N = 28

| | Number of times mentioned as a reason for: | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Reasons | Successful play | Unsuccessful play | Total no. of times cited |
| Games | 18 | 9 | 27 (25%) |
| General cultural differences | 3 | 22 | 25 (23%) |
| Language differences | 4 | 19 | 23 (21%) |
| New ideas, new experiences | 8 | 0 | 8 (7%) |
| Racial differences | 3 | 4 | 7 (6%) |
| Dangers, discomforts | 1 | 5 | 6 (6%) |
| Expected behaviour | 5 | 0 | 5 (5%) |
| Human qualities | 3 | 1 | 4 (4%) |
| Poverty | 0 | 3 | 3 (2%) |
| Totals | 45 (42%) | 63 (58%) | 108 (100%) |

Students' explanations for their views on whether or not they would enjoy playing with students from their selected world community were summarized by means of the categories shown in Table 6.24. The total of 108 statements reflects the fact that most groups offered several explanations in support of the opinions. There are three aspects of these categories that require comment. First, the categories games, general cultural differences and language are clearly all aspects of culture. They were separated out in the table in order to provide a more detailed picture of students' responses. Second, in some instances it would have been possible to place an explanation into more than one category. For example, in one instance a group discussed the poverty of the students but appeared to be also alluding to racial differences. In such cases, the explanation was placed in the category most closely related to its dominant theme. Third, in most of the categories it was possible for students to come up with explanations for either enjoying or not enjoying playing. For example, some students regarded the fact that the students play different games as presenting an exciting opportunity to learn how to play new games, while others foresaw the possibility of being uncomfortable with such things as not knowing the games' rules.

In total, just over 40% of the students' statements about playing with students from a world community consisted of explanations as to why such play would be enjoyable, while 58% dealt with possible barriers to enjoyable play. These results parallel those shown in the first row of Table 6.23 above in which it is shown that 43% of the groups indicated that they thought the play, when it was set in the other students' community, would be enjoyable while 57% either indicated that it would be unenjoyable or provided comments that indicated that they were not sure. A more detailed description of students' comments, with examples cited, can be found in Appendix E of this Report.

In summary, a substantial proportion of the groups seem to think and feel that the differences that they perceive to exist between themselves and the students whose communities and countries they studied are a real barrier to interaction. When this interaction was to take place in the other students' communities, only thirteen of the thirty groups thought that it would be an enjoyable experience. While locating the interaction in the relative security of the students' home communities increased the number of groups expressing positive attitudes from 13 to 20, there remained a significant minority of the groups that were undecided or that indicated they would not find it enjoyable.

Reasons offered for successful interaction most commonly had to do with the likelihood that games would provide a common ground and an opportunity to have "fun". Other factors cited included students' interest in experiencing various aspects of a different culture and their determination to behave 'properly' towards others. Those reasons having to do with unsuccessful interaction, which were noticeably greater in number (63 as opposed to 45), were most commonly related to students' concerns about the problems that could arise from what might be broadly called "cultural differences", including language differences. Less frequent but expressed at some length and with apparent strength of feeling when they did arise were problems that might arise from racial differences and poverty.

In summary, these findings suggest that there is work to be done in Manitoba classrooms with respect to students' attitudes toward how people live in other cultures. In-depth and small-scale world community studies of the sort recommended in the grade 4 Social Studies curriculum may be a useful way to help students become more at ease with and more understanding of cultural differences.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on the grade 4 observational study.

1. The curriculum guide should be revised to provide teachers with clear statements of the attributes of the concept of community. Those features of communities which are not as visible as others should be included, e.g. government, service organizations, water supplies, waste disposal, power supplies, etc.

2. Teachers' attention should be drawn to the importance of the small scale community focus of the grade 4 program. This should be done by revising the curriculum to clarify the intention and value of this approach for grade 4 students.

3. Teachers should provide students with opportunities to work together collaboratively to solve problems, to plan together and to discuss their ideas with their peers.

4. Teachers should take advantage of student interest in current events and include these in the grade 4 program.

5. Teachers should help students with concepts of time and distance as they relate to the communities under study. Students should learn how long it would take to travel to the community they are studying and approximately how far away it is from their home community.

6. Either the curriculum should be revised or sample units should be developed to provide teachers with models of the small scale community approach which would reflect a balance with respect to the curriculum's community selection criteria such as levels of development, geographical diversity and cultural diversity.

7. Teachers should use strategies which encourage students to visualize the community under study. Use of three dimensional building activities, visuals and stories appear to have provided some students with the mental images necessary to help them with this process.

8. Teachers should use materials which are rich enough in detail about people's daily lives and their shared human qualities that they encourage the development of empathy and appreciation for underlying similarities of all people.

9. Teachers should probe with children their reactions to what it would be like to interact with people from other cultures and other settings.

10. Teachers and consultants should work together to develop strategies to encourage intercultural understanding and empathy.

11. Resources which are useful in helping students identify with and understand people in other cultures should be identified/ developed and made available to teachers. Stories and other materials that encourage imaginative identification with children in different cultural settings should be an important part of these resources.

12. The curriculum guides should also be revised to include examples of specific teaching strategies, learning activities, and methods of evaluation with respect to bias, stereotyping and the development of cross-cultural empathy.

13. Teachers should also be encouraged to make use of local people and other community resources that would assist them in making cross-cultural understanding an important part of the grade 4 Social Studies program.

# CHAPTER 7

# Grade Eight Written Test

The primary purpose of the grade 8 Assessment was to determine the extent to which the grade 8 program is achieving its objectives. Teachers were involved in identifying and reviewing the objectives of the curriculum to be assessed and in preparation of the testing instrument in order to ensure congruence. The setting of expectations, and the task of deciding whether students' performance was at, above, or below expectations was a somewhat subjective process, depending largely upon the experience and professional judgment of the Technical Advisory Committee.

The testing instrument consisted of 92 items, divided into four parts, matching the four categories of objectives in the provincial Social Studies curriculum: (1) Social Participation; (2) Attitudes and Values; (3) Thinking and Research Skills; and (4) Knowledge of Facts and Generalizations. Each of the four parts of the test was further divided into subtests. The parts of the test dealing with Social Participation and Attitudes and Values had no right or wrong answers. They were intended to provide some indication of what students think and feel on issues related to the curriculum and to help determine the extent to which the curriculum is meeting its goals in these particular areas. In contrast, the parts of the test dealing with Thinking and Research Skills (including mapwork) and Knowledge of Facts and Generalizations did have correct or best answers. The test also included an essay item (item 92), since the ability to write clearly and correctly is an important part of any Social Studies curriculum. The distribution of subtest items into various topics and subtopics of the curriculum is outlined in Table 7.1 below.

## Table 7.1

SUBTEST OF EACH TEST ITEM

| | COGNITIVE | | AFFECTIVE | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| CONTENT AREA | KNOWLEDGE | THINKING AND RESEARCH SKILLS | SOCIAL PARTICIPATION | ATTITUDES AND VALUES |
| I. PREHISTORIC AND EARLY HISTORIC LIFE | | | | |
| I.1 Life in Prehistoric Times | 29-33 | 60-65 | | 1 |
| I.2 Life in Early River Valley | 34-36 | 66-68 | | 3 |
| II. LIFE IN ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS | | | | |
| II.1 Life in Ancient Europe-Greece/Rome | 37,38,39-41 | 69,70 | | 4 |
| II.2 Life in Ancient Central/ South America | | 71-73 | | 5 |
| II.3 Life in Ancient African/ Indian | | 74 | | |
| III. LIFE IN EARLY MODERN EUROPE | | | | |
| III.1 Life in a Feudal Society | 42-45 | 75 | | |
| III.2 Life in the Renaissance Era | 46-48 | 76 | | 6 |
| III.3 Life in the Reformation Era | 49-51 | 77 | | 7 |
| IV. LIFE IN THE MODERN WORLD | | | | |
| IV.1 Life in a Contemporary Industrial Society | 52-54 | 78 | | 8-11 |
| IV.2 Life in a Contemporary Communist Society | 55,56 | 79 | | 12 |
| IV.3 Life in a Contemporary Developing Society | 57-59 | 80-84 | | 13-15 |
| V. GENERAL SOCIAL STUDIES SKILLS | | 85-91<br>92<br>Long Answer | | 2,16 |
| VI. GENERAL - SOCIAL PARTICIPATION ITEMS | | | 17-28 | |

## KNOWLEDGE OF FACTS AND GENERALIZATIONS

Knowledge of facts and generalizations represents one of the key goals of the Social Studies curriculum and is, indeed, in many ways the foundation for the achievements of the other curricular goals in the areas of skills, attitudes and values, and social participation. The grade 8 Assessment contained thirty-one items (29-59) dealing with the knowledge of facts and generalizations. Their distribution across the units and topics of the program has already been shown in Table 7.1. The percentage of students responding correctly to each of these items is displayed in Table 7.2.

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## Table 7.2

### Percentage of Correct Responses to Items on Knowledge of Facts and Generalizations Subtest

| Units Titles | I Prehistoric & Early Historic Life | | II Ancient Civilizations | | III Early Modern Europe | | IV Modern World | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Item #29. | 33.0% | Item #37. | 53.5% | Item #42. | 52.1% | Item #52. | 47.0% |
| | " #30. | 58.5 | " #38. | 73.5 | " #43. | 37.3 | " #53. | 34.7 |
| | " #31. | 82.7 | " #39. | 57.2 | " #44. | 37.1 | " #54. | 52.7 |
| | " #32. | 70.4 | " #40. | 78.3 | " #45. | 69.2 | " #55. | 64.5 |
| | " #33. | 77.6 | " #41. | 81.1 | " #46. | 41.1 | " #56. | 78.3 |
| | " #34. | 34.4 | | | " #47. | 55.9 | " #57. | 52.2 |
| | " #35. | 72.3 | | | " #48. | 36.2 | " #58. | 44.6 |
| | " #36. | 43.1 | | | " #49. | 36.5 | " #59. | 31.5 |
| | | | | | " #50. | 59.2 | " #51. | 24.1 |
| Subtest Means | | 59.0% | | 68.7% | | 44.9% | | 50.7% |
| | | | | | Overall Mean: | | 53.9% | |

It will be seen from Table 7.2 that items related to Unit II of the grade 8 program, dealing with Ancient Civilizations, produced the best results. This could be because this unit appears to be popular with many teachers who devote a considerable amount of time to it, and who are familiar with it from the old grade 7 program. There was a wide range of responses to Unit I, with four items being answered correctly by more than 70% of students, while two items were answered correctly by fewer than 35% of the students. Unit IV shows a similar spread of correct responses, except that only half of the items were answered correctly by more than 50% of the students. Unit III caused the most difficulty for students.

Table 7.3 regroups the same information so as to show more clearly which items elicited the fewest and the most correct responses.

## Table 7.3

### Response Rates per Item by Range of Correct Responses on Knowledge of Facts and Generalizations Subtest

| | Range of Correct Responses | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Item No. | 0-29% | Item No. | 30-39% | Item No. | 40-49% | Item No. | 50-59% | Item No. | 60-69% | Item No. | 70-79% | Item No. | 80-100% |
| Percentage of Students Responding Correctly to Each Item | 51. | 24.1% | 29. | 33.0% | 36. | 43.1% | 30. | 58.5% | 45. | 69.2% | 32. | 70.4% | 31. | 82.7% |
| | | | 34. | 34.4 | 46. | 41.1 | 37. | 53.5 | 55. | 64.5 | 33. | 77.6 | 41. | 81.1 |
| | | | 43. | 37.3 | 52 | 47.0 | 39. | 57.2 | | | 35. | 72.3 | | |
| | | | 44. | 37.1 | 58. | 44.6 | 42. | 52.1 | | | 38. | 73.5 | | |
| | | | 48. | 36.2 | | | 47. | 55.9 | | | 40. | 78.3 | | |
| | | | 49. | 36.5 | | | 50. | 59.2 | | | 56. | 78.3 | | |
| | | | 53. | 34.7 | | | 54. | 52.7 | | | | | | |
| | | | 59. | 31.5 | | | 57. | 52.2 | | | | | | |
| No. of Items | 1 | | 8 | | 4 | | 8 | | 2 | | 6 | | 2 | |

Table 7.3 shows that of the 31 items dealing with knowledge of facts and generalizations, 13 were answered correctly by fewer than 50% of students and 18 by more than 50% of students. Of this 18, 10 items were answered correctly by 60% or more of students and 8 by 50% to 59%. These results suggest that the Assessment items were a reasonably fair test of student performance on the grade 8 curriculum and were neither too easy nor too difficult overall.

Following is an analysis and discussion of the knowledge objectives organized according to the units of the grade 8 curriculum, beginning with Prehistoric and Early Historic Life.

## PREHISTORIC AND EARLY HISTORIC LIFE

There were eight items devoted to this unit of the Grade 8 program: items 29-33 dealt with prehistoric times and items 34-36 dealt with early river valley civilizations. As shown above, the overall average of correct responses for these items was 59%. Item 31 attracted the highest number of correct responses, with 82.7% of student responses correct:

*31. When Neolithic people gained a knowledge of farming, they no longer had to depend entirely on*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *7.7%* | *A)* | *the use of crude tools and weapons.* |
| *6.2* | *B)* | *finding ways to transport heavy loads.* |
| *82.7* | *C)** | *hunting animals or finding edible plants.* |
| *2.9* | *D)* | *animal skins for warmth.* |

Items 32, 33, and 35 all received correct response rates exceeding 70.0%. Item 33 asked about archaeological evidence and was answered correctly by 77.6% of students. Items 32 and 33 both asked students to identify relationships between different factors and were answered correctly by 70.4% and 77.6% of students respectively:

*32. Primitive people developed ideas of architecture in fulfilling their need for*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *11.4%* | *A)* | *food storage for winter.* |
| *9.6* | *B)* | *a place for primitive religious festivals.* |
| *7.5* | *C)* | *traps and cages for animals.* |
| *70.4* | *D)** | *shelter for their families.* |

*33. Which one of the following objects found by archaeologists would teach us the most about how prehistoric people met their basic needs?*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *6.7%* | *A)* | *A piece of volcanic rock* |
| *12.3* | *B)* | *A rib from a buffalo* |
| *77.6* | *C)** | *A needle made from bone* |
| *3.0* | *D)* | *An eagle feather buried in sand* |

Item 30 caused students a little more difficulty, with 58.5% of students identifying the correct response to the item. However, it should be noted that, while 21.5% chose what was technically an incorrect answer, there is a defensible chain of reasoning behind the choice and so, in a sense, the response rate of 58.5% is a little misleading:

*30. The fist hatchet was important because it*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *21.5%* | *A)* | *proved people could think.* |
| *4.7* | *B)* | *was easy to make.* |
| *58.5* | *C)** | *improved the way people got food.* |
| *14.3* | *D)* | *led to the discovery of fire.* |

Item 34 was answered correctly by only 34.4% of students. The item required a knowledge of the term, "specialization". The incorrect responses were distributed more or less equally among unionization (27.8%); segregation (16.2%); and cooperation (21.1%). This pattern of responses suggests that the item asked about a term with which many students were unfamiliar.

Item 29 was answered correctly by 33.8% of students, a disappointing result in that the item dealt with a basic concept of this unit of the program:

*29. Which one of the following would be found in historic times but NOT during prehistoric times?*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *33.8%* | *A)* | *Metal tools* |
| *22.1* | *B)* | *Permanent settlements* |
| *10.1* | *C)* | *Some form of language* |
| *33.0* | *D)** | *A form of writing* |

The item is not ambiguous and the distribution of incorrect responses (especially between responses A and B) suggests that students simply did not know the appropriate information.

Item 36 also caused some difficulties since it was answered correctly by only 44.3% of students. It is understandable why so many students might have opted for response A, even though with a little more thought they should have realized that one can have tools and weapons made of materials other than iron. This, as elsewhere in the Assessment, both in Grade 8 and Grade 10, is probably an example of students rushing to a conclusion too quickly, before weighing all relevant information:

*36. Because the ancient Egyptians had no iron*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *25.1%* | *A)* | *they could not make tools or weapons.* |
| *19.0* | *B)* | *they sent expeditions throughout Africa to find supplies.* |
| *11.8* | *C)* | *they were unable to develop their agriculture.* |
| *44.3* | *D)** | *other Mediterranean peoples became more powerful than the Egyptians.* |

Overall, the Technical Advisory Committee felt that on this section of the Assessment, students had performed more or less as expected, with the exceptions of items 29 and 34, where performance was below expectations and this lowered the overall mean of correct responses for the section.

## ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS

Five items (37-41) were devoted to this unit of the grade 8 program. The overall mean of correct responses was 68.7%. Item 41 was answered most successfully, with an 81.1% correct response rate:

*41. Commerce, or trade, was important in the ancient world because people*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *3.9%* | *A)* | *could make coins out of gold.* |
| *81.1* | *B)** | *turned to one another for goods and services.* |
| *8.3* | *C)* | *wanted to spread their religion.* |
| *6.3* | *D)* | *learned to ship products by sailboat.* |

Item 40 also caused little difficulty for most students, generating a correct response rate of 78.3%:

*40. Ancient Greek and Roman coastal towns were the first to expand because of*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *78.3%* | *A)** | *trade.* |
| *4.3* | *B)* | *mining.* |
| *2.3* | *C)* | *forestry.* |
| *14.2* | *D)* | *agriculture.* |

Item 38 which asked for the definition of the term "democracy" had a correct response rate of 73.5%.

Items 37 and 39 appeared to cause the most difficulty but even these received correct response rates of over 50%:

*37. People in ancient civilizations were mainly trying to meet their social needs when they*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *9.2%* | *A)* | *built ships.* |
| *53.5* | *B)** | *developed laws.* |
| *14.7* | *C)* | *made clothing.* |
| *21.6* | *D)* | *farmed the land.* |

*39. Many ancient Greeks and Romans relied on the sea for transportation because*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *14.0%* | *A)* | *there were no paved roads.* |
| *57.2* | *B)** | *much of the land was mountainous.* |
| *12.8* | *C)* | *enemies forced them to do so.* |
| *14.8* | *D)* | *the wheel was not invented.* |

The Technical Advisory Committee felt that students' performance on this unit of the written test was more than satisfactory. This might, in part, be due to the fact that most classes spent considerable time on this unit of the program and studied it in some detail.

## EARLY MODERN EUROPE

The Assessment contained ten items (42-51) that dealt with this unit of the grade 8 program. The overall mean rate of correct responses on these ten items was 44.9%, giving this unit the lowest mean response rate. The items were distributed through the unit as follows: Feudal Society, four items (42-45); Renaissance, three items (46-48); Reformation, three items (49-51). None of these three topics stood out as being especially well or especially badly answered.

Of the four items that dealt with feudal society, two were answered correctly by more than half of students, but two were answered correctly by only 37%. Item 45 caused the least difficulty, with 69.2% of students correctly identifying the church as the primary supporter of education during the Middle Ages. The feudal concept of the act of homage was defined correctly by 52.1% of students (item 42). The responses to items 43 and 44 were somewhat ambiguous. Although only 37.3% of students correctly answered item 43 by realizing that in feudal society a man could be both a lord and a vassal, another 28.0% selected the combination of a freeman and a knight and the reasoning involved here is understandable since a knight was by definition free. There is some ambiguity in the item itself, which may account for at least some of the students' errors:

*43. Under the feudal system, a man could be both a*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *26.5%* | *A)* | *serf and a freeman.* |
| *37.3* | *B)** | *lord and a vassal.* |
| *7.4* | *C)* | *lord and serf.* |
| *28.0* | *D)* | *freeman and a knight.* |

Similarly, in the case of item 44, although only 37.1% of students chose the technically correct response, it is understandable why 28.7% of students chose response D, since some versions of feudalism did coexist with powerful monarchies, though others did not. However, it is also true that the distribution of responses to this item suggests that students were not as familiar with the concept of feudalism as might have been expected:

*44. The feudal system*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *15.5%* | *A)* | *produced a surplus of goods to trade.* |
| *37.1* | *B)** | *gave structure to the lives of the people.* |
| *17.7* | *C)* | *provided people with little protection.* |
| *28.7* | *D)* | *had kings who were very powerful.* |

Items 46-48 dealt with the Renaissance. Item 47 was answered correctly by 55.9% of students, while item 46 was answered correctly by 41.1% and item 48 by 36.2%.

The responses to item 47 suggest that many students were relying on intuition and guesswork rather than specific knowledge. It might also be that students failed to consider the full implications of the word "immediate" in the stem of the question:

*47. The immediate effect of the printing press was to*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *21.1%* | *A)* | *teach people to read.* |
| *3.2* | *B)* | *encourage libraries.* |
| *18.8* | *C)* | *make possible the publishing of newspapers.* |
| *55.9* | *D)** | *spread ideas quickly.* |

Similarly, the responses to items 46 and 48 suggest that students simply did not possess the appropriate factual information, and thus resorted to guesswork:

*46. Which one of the following was a cause of exploration and European expansion that began in the fifteenth century?*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *19.5%* | *A)* | *Muslim expansion into Europe* |
| *21.1* | *B)* | *Less interest in Christianity* |
| *41.1* | *C)** | *Merchants seeking new markets* |
| *16.9* | *D)* | *The decline of the middle class* |

*48. The economic system that replaced feudalism in Europe was*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *33.8%* | *A)* | *socialism.* |
| *36.2* | *B)** | *capitalism.* |
| *7.7* | *C)* | *Marxism.* |
| *21.2* | *D)* | *communism.* |

Both items called for what might be termed conceptual knowledge rather than for specific factual information and thus could be somewhat abstract for many grade 8 students, who tend to think in concrete terms (Osborne, 1975). The Technical Advisory Committee was also of the opinion that many students had probably not been taught how to deal with the kind of information contained in these items.

The Reformation period was dealt with in items 49-51. The results suggest that students were not as well informed about this period as might have been expected. Only 36.5%, for example, were able to identify "indulgences" in item 49:

***49. "When the coin in the coffer rings, a soul from purgatory springs." This 16th century verse refers to***

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *13.6%* | *A)* | ***predestination.*** |
| *24.4* | *B)* | ***heresy.*** |
| *24.1* | *C)* | ***tithes.*** |
| *36.5* | *D)** | ***indulgences.*** |

The responses to item 50 found that 59.2% of students were able to identify Martin Luther, a result which is lower than expected in view of the considerable importance placed on Luther in this unit of the grade 8 program. Item 51 also caused difficulties for students, with only 24.1% answering it correctly:

***51. In which of these countries do serious, long-term disagreements based on religion occur today?***

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *56.3%* | *A)* | ***East and West Germany*** |
| *9.4* | *B)* | ***France*** |
| *9.1* | *C)* | ***Austria*** |
| *24.1* | *D)** | ***Northern Ireland*** |

Overall, the Technical Advisory Committee felt that results on this section of the Assessment, dealing with life in early modern Europe, were below expectations. Students were apparently more knowledgeable about feudal society than they were about the Renaissance and the Reformation, but on all of these topics students were less knowledgeable than the Committee had expected. It is not clear why this should be. It is widely reported that many grade 8 classes spend a great deal of time studying ancient civilizations, especially Egypt, Greece and Rome, often devoting the whole of the first term to them. It might be, therefore, that early modern Europe gets short shrift in many classrooms, despite the time allotments suggested in the curriculum guide.

## LIFE IN THE MODERN WORLD

The Assessment devoted eight items (52-59) to this unit of the grade 8 program. Of these eight, three dealt with the Industrial Revolution (52-54); two with communist society (55-56); and three with the developing world (57-59). The overall average rate of correct responses was 50.7%.

The responses to the three items dealing with the Industrial Revolution appear to indicate that students were not well-informed about this topic. Fifty-two point seven percent (52.7%) correctly identified one of the key concepts of the Industrial Revolution, but a higher proportion of correct responses could reasonably be expected to what should have been a straightforward item:

*54. Which one of the following changes occurred when the Industrial Revolution began in England?*

*More people*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *17.1%* | *A)* | *moved to rural areas.* |
| *10.2* | *B)* | *worked in private jobs.* |
| *52.7* | *C)** | *worked in factories.* |
| *18.5* | *D)* | *earned less money.* |

A slightly lower percentage correctly identified the role of trades unions, as shown by the response to item 52:

*52. Which one of the following best explains why labour unions were originally formed in Great Britain?*

*They were formed to*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *9.5%* | *A)* | *advance technological growth.* |
| *23.2* | *B)* | *increase industrial output.* |
| *19.3* | *C)* | *share profits between workers and owners.* |
| *47.0* | *D)** | *improve working conditions.* |

Item 53 was a more complex item which required the establishment of a relationship between industrialism, the need for raw materials, and the growth of empire. It was answered correctly by 34.7% of students.

The two items on communist society were answered more successfully, perhaps because they were simpler items. Sixty-four point five percent (64.5%) of students knew that the Soviet Union imports large quantities of grain from Canada (item 55), and 78.3% knew that under communism decisions about what is to be produced are made by government (item 56).

The three items on the developing world were answered less well. Fifty-two point two percent (52.2%) of students correctly identified subsistence farming (item 57), while another 28.0% confused it with intensive farming. Item 59 called for some interpretation and judgment on the part of students and was answered correctly by 31.5%, although it is understandable why another 25.5% would opt for response C in answer to this item:

*59. Which one of the following would be a long-term way of solving the problem of food shortages in developing countries?*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *31.5%* | *A)** | *Grow their own food instead of cash crops for export* |
| *19.2* | *B)* | *Ship food to the people at low prices* |
| *25.5* | *C)* | *Clear more land for farming* |
| *22.3* | *D)* | *Send the people harvesting machinery to use in the fields* |

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The other responses, however, suggest either that students did not notice or did not understand the phrase "long-term" in the item, or that they were simply guessing.

The response to item 58 provides another example of what is addressed elsewhere in this Report, viz., the tendency of students to rush to a conclusion before they have weighed all the evidence before them. In this case, it seems that over one-third of students read no further, once they had seen response A, and thus failed to consider the implications of response C or to weigh one against the other:

*58. The huge population growth in developing countries is due mainly to*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *35.3%* | *A)* | *an increase in the birth rate.* |
| *7.6* | *B)* | *increased trade with First World countries.* |
| *44.6* | *C)** | *an increase in the birth rate and a decrease in the death rate.* |
| *11.2* | *D)* | *increased foreign aid.* |

Overall, the Technical Advisory Committee felt that the results on this section of the Assessment were below expectations. The items were clear and unambiguous and addressed some of the key concepts of this unit of the grade 8 program. The Committee thought it likely that this unit of the program, like the unit on Early Modern Europe, did not receive the time and coverage it deserved, due to the tendency to spend long periods of time on earlier units, and especially on ancient civilizations.

## THINKING AND RESEARCH SKILLS

One of the major goals of the Social Studies curriculum is to help students think more clearly and more critically for themselves. The intent is that they should learn not only the necessary basic factual knowledge but also that they learn how to learn for themselves. To the extent that the Social Studies curriculum is successful, students will be able to identify a problem, to pick out its important components, to decide what research might be needed to deal with it, to weigh and assess different kinds of information and to arrive at a tentative conclusion. The K-12 Social Studies Curriculum Guide (1985) describes social studies thinking and research skills as follows:

> "The thinking and research skill objectives are to assist students in developing such critical thinking and research skills as:
>
> - locating, organizing, and evaluating information;
> - acquiring information through reading, listening, and observing;
> - communicating in oral and written form;
> - interpreting pictures, charts, graphs, tables, maps and globes;
> - understanding time and chronology.

> The thinking and research skill objectives make it possible for students to be actively involved in gathering and interpreting social studies data, in drawing conclusions, and in critical thinking.
>
> Gathering Data - gathering data includes such activities as identifying, testing, acquiring, listening, looking, examining, observing, searching, interviewing, locating, iteming, and recording.
>
> Interpreting Data - interpreting data includes such activities as comparing, describing, explaining, inferring, analyzing, evaluating, and distinguishing. It also includes the ability to interpret graphic and symbolic data, such as maps, graphs, tables, charts, timelines, and cartoons.
>
> Drawing Conclusions - drawing conclusions includes examining, discussing, debating, summarizing, postulating, synthesizing, classifying, creating, evaluating of evidence, and drawing of warranted conclusions.
>
> Critical Thinking - critical thinking skills include such activities as formulating, detecting, perceiving, hypothesizing, inferring, analyzing, evaluating, generalizing, conceptualizing, judging, recognizing underlying assumptions, and identifying central issues" (p.10).

These skills are intended to be developed throughout the Social Studies curriculum from Kindergarten onwards. Obviously, they have to be taught in ways that are appropriate to the age, grade, and ability of students and, as students proceed through the school system, they will be introduced to these various skills in increasingly sophisticated ways. Moreover, skills should be taught in a sequential way so that each year's work builds upon and reinforces those that precede it. By the time they reach grade 8, therefore, students should have received a steady diet of instruction in thinking and research skills. However, it would be unrealistic to expect them to have perfected these skills. It is reasonable to expect them to have mastered the basic skills, but not those which are more sophisticated or call for more abstract reasoning. It should be remembered also that the typical grade 8 classroom will contain an extremely wide range of levels of ability, interest, and motivation, varying from the most advanced to the most elementary. Any interpretation of students' skills must take this into account.

Because of the importance of thinking and research skills to the Social Studies curriculum, and indeed to education generally, it was felt that the grade 8 Social Studies Assessment should give these skills appropriate emphasis. The test, therefore, included thirty-three items (60-92) in the thinking and research skills section. One of these items (item 92) involved the writing of an essay and, in fact, was not just an item but a section in its own right. Essentially, the broad skills that were assessed were these:

The fifth category, writing a short essay, required students to organize and present information on a selected topic in a way that involved both ability to recall and relate relevant facts and to present them in a coherent and organized way that observed the rules of grammar and written expression. This was an important part of the grade 8 Assessment and although, for obvious reasons, it consisted of only one item (item 92), students were given twenty-five minutes to complete it, so that in fact it became not just an item, but a section in its own right.

Finally, there was one other item (item 82) which did not fit into any of these five categories. It dealt with students' ability to distinguish among terms or concepts, in this case, those of first, second and third worlds.

The percentage of correct responses for each item and the means for each of the categories of skill and research objectives are presented in Table 7.4.

Table 7.4

**Percentage of Correct Responses to Items on the First Four Categories of Thinking and Research Skills**

| Units Titles | I Deriving Meaning and Implications of a Passage | II Interpreting Visual Evidence | III Assessing & Using Sources of Information | IV Evaluating Statements for Accuracy & Verifiability |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Item #60. 92.2% | Item #64. 83.7% | Item #63. 22.0% | Item #65. 66.8% |
| | " #61. 85.6 | " #78. 44.5 | " #68. 61.5 | " #67. 64.1 |
| | " #62. 87.9 | " #79. 40.0 | " #73. 43.3 | " #75. 44.7 |
| | " #66. 54.3 | " #85. 69.9 | " #74. 46.4 | " #83. 65.7 |
| | " #69. 73.5 | " #86. 39.2 | " #76. 81.6 | " #84. 54.9 |
| | " #70. 41.7 | " #87. 54.3 | " #77. 27.6 | |
| | " #71. 57.2 | " #88. 46.4 | | |
| | " #72. 49.0 | " #89. 58.0 | | |
| | " #80. 80.0 | " #90. 45.3 | | |
| | " #81. 74.1 | " #91. 49.2 | | |
| Subtest Means | 69.5% | 53.1% | 47.1% | 59.2% |

Though these figures provide some insights, one must be careful not to read too much into them. One item on which students perform either exceptionally well or exceptionally poorly can obviously distort the results. One or two unusually easy or difficult items can have a similar effect, and one should always bear in mind the fact that it is dangerous to arrive at firm conclusions on the basis of so few items. It is essential, therefore, that the data provided by the Assessment should be seen as suggestive rather than definitive.

The following discussion of students' performance on the Thinking and Research Skills section of the Assessment will follow the categories described above.

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1. Deriving the meaning and implications of a particular passage.
2. Interpreting maps, charts, cartoons and pictorial evidence.
3. Assessing and using sources of information.
4. Evaluating statements for accuracy and verifiability.
5. Writing a short essay, requiring the application of thinking and research skills.

The first of these five categories, i.e., deriving the meaning and implications of a particular passage, was the subject of ten items (60-62, 66, 69-72, 80-81). Essentially, they consisted of presenting the students with a short passage of written information and asking them to explain what it said, to identify inferences and conclusions, to apply it to a new setting, and to extrapolate from it any tendencies or trends. Items 80 and 81 did this through a combination of pictorial and written stimuli, but the amount of written information in these particular items makes it reasonable to include them in this category.

The second category, i.e., interpreting maps, charts, cartoons and other forms of pictorial information, needs little explanation. In many ways, it is similar to the first category, except that the information is presented to the students not in written but in pictorial or diagrammatic form. The grade 8 Assessment included items which involved the use of a cartoon, a map, a chart, and a timeline. There were in all ten such items (64, 78-79, 85-91).

The third category was designed to evaluate students' ability to assess and use sources of information. This required them to determine which of various sources of informa- tion would be likely to be more or less factual or interpretive (e.g., encyclopedias, editorials, textbooks, and so on). It also required them to determine which of various kinds of information would be most useful in researching a particular topic, and in distinguishing among such things as indexes, glossaries, and contents pages. In short, this category of items was directed to the kinds of skills that students need if they are to do basic research involving their textbooks and, more importantly, reference materials. The Assessment included six items that dealt with these kinds of skills (63, 68, 73-4, 76-7).

The fourth category consisted of items designed to assess how well students could evaluate statements for accuracy and verifiability. Essentially, this involved asking them to decide whether a particular statement was a statement of fact or of opinion; whether it could be proved to be objectively true or false; whether, or to what extent, it was capable of satisfactory proof. There were five items of this type on the test (65, 67, 75, 83-84).

## Deriving the Meaning and Implications of a Written Passage

The most obvious conclusion to emerge from the Assessment in this area of skills is that most grade 8 students appear to have little difficulty in arriving at a basic understanding of a passage, in identifying its main idea and answering correctly basic items based upon it. Thus, for example, items 60, 61, and 62 were answered correctly by 92.2%, 85.6%, and 87.9% of students respectively. These items were based upon a relatively straightforward paragraph describing what anthropologists do, followed by a series of statements which students had to identify as true or false. Items 80 and 81 were a little more demanding in that they presented a combination of picture and captions, in which the language was somewhat more complex, and asked the students to identify the problem that was being addressed and to identify the issue underlying this problem. Item 80 was answered correctly by 80.0% of students and item 81 by 74.1%.

In a similar vein, item 69 gave students a short passage describing an aspect of life in Sparta and asked them to identify the main idea. Seventy-three point five percent (73.5%) of students did so correctly.

These items (i.e., 60-62, 69, 80-81) obviously caused no difficulty for the great majority of grade 8 students. It seems, therefore, reasonable to conclude that, at the level of basic understanding and comprehension, most grade 8 students are able to work successfully with basic information. They can identify main ideas, grasp the meaning of what is present and read effectively.

Some difficulties began to appear when students were asked to perform at somewhat higher levels of difficulty and sophistication. Besides being asked to identify the basic meaning of a given passage, students were also asked to make inferences or extrapolations, or to apply what they had read to a new situation. For example, item 66 presented students with a short passage describing the accelerating rate of technological changes over the course of human history and then asked students which of a number of statements was a reasonable prediction of the future. Fifty-four point three percent (54.3%) of students selected the correct response, viz. that humans will progress at an ever-increasing rate. However, one should perhaps not be too fast to read too much into this result, since 22.2% of students selected what was, strictly speaking, an incorrect response, viz. that humans will slowly progress. One can see ways in which students could have arrived at this response on the basis of the information they were given. In the absence of any information on the process of reasoning by which they arrived at their preferred answer, it is difficult to say unequivocally that they were wrong. They correctly identified the concept of progress but gave their own interpretation to its speed.

Item 70 sheds a little more light on item 66. Here, on the basis of a short description of Roman roads, students were asked to identify an unstated conclusion, and 41.7% did so correctly. Two wrong responses attracted a significant number of students, 22.9% and 25.6% respectively, but though these responses were indeed based directly on the passage, they were not "unstated" conclusions. It seems that this particular task was not something with which students were familiar.

The responses to items 71 and 72 confirmed that about half of grade 8 students have some difficulties in this area of skills. These items were based upon a passage describing the "Mita", which was described as a tax paid by peasants to their rulers in the form of labour in Inca society. Students were asked not for the basic meaning of this passage, but rather to make judgments arising from it. Thus, item 71 asked how an arena would be built today if the "Mita" system were in effect, while item 72 raised the question as to the fairness of the "Mita" system. Fifty-seven point two percent (57.2%) and forty-nine percent (49.0%) respectively answered items 71 and 72 correctly.

It would appear that while students can, by and large, derive the basic meaning of what they read, about half of them find it difficult to move much beyond this. The Technical Advisory Committee concluded that many grade 8 students apparently are not familiar with the skills of drawing and assessing conclusions which are not expressly stated, or with applying what they have learned in a new and unfamiliar context. There is no evidence that this skill is beyond the capacity of students at the grade 8 level. Rather, there is evidence that, with appropriate teaching, they can do it (Booth, 1987). It seems probable that students had difficulty with these items largely because they were unfamiliar with them and because the items called for skills which they had not been taught. This problem may well have been compounded by students' tendency to rush through the Assessment without giving full and considered attention to specifically what any given question was asking. It is well-known that students of this age tend to rush to premature conclusions before they have considered all relevant information.

## Interpreting Maps, Charts, Cartoons and Pictorial Evidence

Social Studies teaching has long made use of visual sources, be it in the form of pictures, slides, filmstrips, maps, films, or some other medium. Most often these have been used as reinforcement for the spoken and written word, but increasingly they are being seen as valuable sources of information and stimulation in their own right. They are certainly valuable vehicles for the teaching of skills and information. The Assessment contained ten items that required students to handle pictorial or visual evidence. Three items involved the interpretation of a map; four the use of a timeline; one a cartoon; one a bar-graph; and one a sketch.

It was this last (item 64) that students handled most successfully, with 83.7% choosing the correct answer. The item presented a sketch of an ancient burial and asked students what it suggested about the people it represented. The other items that were based upon pictorial material were, by contrast, answered less well. An item based upon a political cartoon was answered correctly by 40.0% of students (item 79). An item involving a bar-graph was answered correctly by 44.5% of students (item 78).

In both cases, students' responses suggested that they did not properly explore the implications of the item. Instead, they quickly seized upon one aspect of the item, failed to suspend judgment while they weighed other factors, and opted for an answer which appealed to their common-sense or intuition without checking to see whether it was consistent with the information in front of them. This is the behaviour that some psychologists describe as premature closure and which has been found to be a common element of adolescent thinking, especially at or about the grade 8 level. One can see it at work in item 79, for example, where students too quickly seized upon particular aspects of the cartoon without analyzing it as a whole. Thus, 24.7% of students seized upon the tanks, missiles, and other military apparatus which feature prominently in the cartoon and thought that the main point of the cartoon was its depiction of Soviet military strength. Another 22.8% went further and noticed the lone individual drawn in the cartoon talking to a tank commander, concluding that the central issue of the cartoon was freedom of speech. Only 40.0% successfully put everything together and correctly identified the central issue as the balance between military spending and consumer goods.

Similarly, in item 78, which called for the analysis of a bar-graph, 44.5% correctly answered the item but the remainder chose responses which, while they were plausible, were not supported by the information in the graph. Thus, 26.2% linked urban population growth with pollution; 16.6% with slums; and 11.2% with disease. However, none of these phenomena was dealt with in the graph itself which depicted only the relative increases in urban and rural population between 1700 and 1950 in England and Wales. It is true that the item asked which of the various possible answers was "best supported by the graph" and it may well be that many grade 8 students are not used to this particular type of item, but, even so, there is evidence in both items 78 and 79 that students do not work with visual evidence as well as might be expected.

Items 85 to 88 were all based upon the use of a timeline. Item 85 asked students to identify two people who lived at about the same time and 69.9% did so correctly. Items 86 to 88 were answered less well but it seems probable that errors arose not from a failure to work with a timeline but from errors of calculation or estimation. Item 86, for example, asked students to work out how many years passed between the fall of Rome and the voyages of Columbus. Although only 39.2% of students correctly answered 1016 years, another 25.9% said 1110 and it is likely that this represents a matter of estimating points on the timeline and doing the necessary calculation, not a failure to grasp the concept of a timeline and its chronology. Similarly, in item 87, while 54.3% of students successfully used the timeline to place the date of the fall of Rome at 476 A.D., another 28.9% put it at 585 A.D. Similarly, in item 88, 46.4% of students correctly dated the beginning of the Crusades as 1095, but another 36.4% worked out the date as 1181. For the most part it seems reasonable to explain these variations as caused by students' failure to gauge distances on a timeline with sufficient accuracy. It could well be that they simply worked too quickly.

The Assessment also contained three items which required students to analyze a map of the ancient Middle East. They were not required to locate places but rather to work with the information provided on the map. Item 89 asked students whether most ancient Middle Eastern cities (shown on the map) were located near rivers or other physical features. Fifty-eight percent (58.0%) of students correctly selected rivers, but, surprisingly, another 19.6% incorrectly chose seacoasts. Two coastal cities, Tyre and Sidon, were prominently located on the map, but they were outnumbered by riverside cities, and it might be that, once again, students rushed too quickly to an answer before weighing all the relevant evidence. Item 90 asked for the direction of the flow of the Nile, and although 45.3% correctly said north, another 40.6% incorrectly said south. This appears to be a common perceptual problem with students, even with those older than grade 8, who too easily identify a direction of flow as downwards, regardless of any other features. Item 91 dealt directly with the location of Jerusalem and was answered correctly by 49.2% of students. There is no obvious reason why more students did not answer this item correctly and, in general, the Technical Advisory Committee felt that students did less well than expected on the map items, in part because they appear not to have taken the time needed to think carefully about what the question required.

### Assessing and Using Sources of Information

The Assessment included six items that required the application of these particular skills. Item 63 required students to identify a primary source and only 22.0% did so successfully. Twenty-eight percent of students described their textbook as a primary source, and another 39.5% chose a book written by an anthropologist. It seems likely that the technical meaning of the term, primary source, had not been taught to many students, who therefore read primary to mean most useful or most accessible.

Item 68 asked students to identify the sources that would be most useful in learning about the relationship between climate and Egyptian or Mesopotamian society. Sixty-one point five percent (61.5%) of students correctly selected an encyclopedia and an atlas and another 22.9% not altogether unreasonably selected an encyclopedia and a globe. In responding to item 73, 43.3% of students selected the correct answer. The item presented some information on an archaeological site and asked what this suggested about the people who had once lived there. The Technical Advisory Committee had expected more students to answer this item correctly. Item 74 was also answered less well than the Committee expected. Students were asked to select from a list of possible references which one would be the most complete source for researching a particular problem. Forty-six point four percent (46.4%) of students answered correctly. Item 76 was answered correctly by 81.6% of students, who identified a glossary as the quickest way to find the meaning of a historical term, such as feudalism or Renaissance. Item 77, however, showed that students were not altogether clear about differences among sources. It asked whether the least biased source of information about Martin Luther would come from an encyclopedia, an editorial, a diary, or an autobiography. Only 27.6% of students correctly chose an encyclopedia, while 33.7% chose an editorial, 17.6% a diary, and 19.7% an autobiography.

The Technical Advisory Committee felt that, with the obvious exception of item 76, students did less well on these items than expected. It seems that in many cases students had not been taught the information that would have helped them answer more successfully.

## Evaluating Statements for Accuracy and Verifiability

There were five items on the Assessment which required students to assess statements for accuracy or verifiability. Item 65 asked which of a number of statements would be most difficult to prove true or false. It was answered correctly by 66.8% of students. Items 67 and 83 asked students to distinguish between statements of fact and statements of opinion and were answered correctly by 64.1% and 65.7% of students respectively. Items 75 and 84 asked students to decide which of a number of statements would be most difficult to prove. Item 75 was answered correctly by 44.7% of students, and item 84 by 54.9%.

There is a rough consistency among these results, in the sense that approximately 65% of students were able to deal with issues of fact versus opinion (items 65, 67, 83), but a lower percentage were able to handle items of verifiability successfully. The Technical Advisory Committee felt that item 65 was answered somewhat better than might have been expected, that items 67 and 83 were roughly what might have been expected, and that students' responses to items 75 and 84 were below expectations.

## Essay-writing

The ability to write coherently and clearly is universally accepted to be an important goal of education and it has always been a key component of social studies curricula. Paragraphs, essays, reports, papers, projects, and other forms of sustained writing have always been important in social studies teaching. Such work requires students to use the knowledge that they have, to research knowledge that they need, and to present their findings in clear, intelligible language that will create no difficulties for their readers. The process involves many important skills, whose value obviously stretches far beyond the social studies. Thus, the grade 8 Assessment included a long-answer item, which required students to write a short, three-to-five paragraph essay, with a maximum time allotment of twenty-five minutes, of which five minutes were suggested for organization and twenty minutes for actual writing.

The item (item 92 on the Assessment) allowed students a choice of topics and was worded as follows:

> *Choose one of the following topics:*
>
> *92. A) Neolithic (New Stone Age) compared to Canadian Society*
> *B) Early River Valley (Egypt) compared to Canadian Society*
> *C) Ancient Civilization (Greek) compared to Canadian Society*
> *D) Early Modern Europe (Renaissance) compared to Canadian Society*
> *E) Modern World (Third World) compared to Canadian Society*
>
> *How have these societies organized to meet their needs? Compare such needs as protection, law, health, and others.*
>
> *Answer in 3 to 5 paragraphs.*
> *Your answer will be evaluated on:*
> *a) how well you discuss the topic*
> *b) sentence structure and usage*
> *c) mechanics (punctuation, capitalization, spelling)*

It will be seen that the item allowed students to choose one of the units of the grade 8 program, to think about it in terms of the concept of the way of life which is central to the Social Studies curriculum, and to compare it to contemporary Canada. In this way, the item called for both knowledge of a given historical topic and the application of that knowledge. The item obviously involves much more than a recall of factual information: it calls for facts to be remembered, organized and then used to meet a specific requirement. In short, the item requires a fair degree of sophistication for grade 8 students if it is to be answered satisfactorily. At the same time, it is an item which is or should be within the capacity of most grade 8 students to answer at some level. It certainly represents the kinds of skills that are important in the Social Studies curriculum.

From the five topics listed in item 92, students chose as follows: Neolithic 21.8%; Early River Valley 10.7%; Ancient Civilization 8.5%; Early Modern Europe 9.8%; and Modern (Third World) 46.1%.

It is impossible to be certain why so many students selected Topic E, the Third World, but it might be that they were influenced by the fact that this would have been the part of the grade 8 program that they had most recently taken. They may well have also had a wider general knowledge of the Third World, when compared to the more specifically historical topics, as a result of the amount of coverage in the media, especially in the last year or two. It is also possible that there was some spillover here from the grade 7 program, which also looks at some aspects of the Third World, so that students generally felt more comfortable with the topic.

Students' answers were marked both for their incorporation of appropriate factual knowledge and for their ability to organize and present this knowledge in a systematic way so as to answer the item that was set. The approach that was used for evaluating students' answers was the SOLO method (Structure of the Observed Learning Outcome) (Biggs and Collis, 1981).

The SOLO Taxonomy is a tool to analyze the quality of students' responses in an objective and systematic way. It assists teachers to discriminate between material which has been well learned from that which has been poorly learned, much in the same way as mature thought is distinguishable from immature thought.

The SOLO Taxonomy shows a close linkage between evaluation and instruction. It will also convey to students why they were evaluated in the way they were so that they might understand more clearly how they can improve their responses in the future. It provides a structure to help teachers make judgments about the quality of learning that has taken place in the classroom at a particular time.

There were four main dimensions used to evaluate students' responses:

a) working memory capacity (refers to the amount of working memory, or attention span, that the different levels of SOLO require)

b) relating operation (refers to the way in which the response and the item interrelate)

c) consistency and closure (refers to making consistent conclusions so that there is no contradiction either between the conclusion and the data, or between different possible conclusions)

d) structure (refers to the level of response, resulting from the interaction of the above dimensions and whether the student uses irrelevant data, relevant data or related data, e.g., analogy, hypothesis, etc.)

The responses were assessed in the context of these dimensions and assigned to one of five levels:

> Level 1 Prestructural A: The response uses irrelevant data or avoids the item, characterized by minimal knowledge and no elaboration.
>
> Level 2 Unistructural B: The response uses primarily one relevant datum; characterized by minimal understanding with little elaboration, basically makes one point.
>
> Level 3 Multistructural C: The response uses several relevant data, characterized by some understanding through the elaboration. However, the data is not interrelated and may be inconsistent. The student has found it difficult to come to a consistent conclusion.
>
> Level 4 Relational D: The response uses several relevant data which are integrated. The elaboration demonstrates interrelation of data, uses examples, generalizes, and makes a consistent conclusion.
>
> Level 5 Extended Abstract E: The response uses several relevant and related data which are integrated. The elaboration demonstrates interrelation of data , uses examples, generalizes, uses analogy hypothesis, or deduction and weighs the evidence. The conclusion can entertain alternative outcomes and therefore may not come to a definite closure.

As well as this overall level of judgment which refers to students' ability to select, organize, and present information in a coherent, sustained way, the SOLO approach also provides a way to evaluate both sentence structure and the basic mechanics of writing, such as grammar, spelling, and so on.

## Sentence Structure and Usage

No hard and fast rules can be set down for sentence structure. At times, a variety of sentence structures is appropriate to create and maintain reader interest. Sometimes repetitive patterns can create a desired effect. Sometimes, short, choppy sentences are appropriate to the topic and discourse; at other times, long, elegant structures are appropriate. Nonetheless, it is still possible to form some judgment of the quality and appropriateness of sentences.

Usage refers to the "correctness" of the structures used by a writer. Difficulties in such areas as verb tense, verb agreement, pronoun reference and the like fall into the area of usage.

Students' answers were evaluated in light of these considerations and assigned to one of these levels:

A. Not sufficient material to make an evaluation (under 75 words) or impossible to decipher.

B. LOW: The sentence structures are little more than simple sentences; a small number of structures are repeated throughout the paper so that the paper becomes boring or predictable. The author seems to have serious difficulties in presenting effectively-constructed sentences. Grammatical errors and problems of sentence structure detract from the validity of the answer.

C. MIDDLE: Although the writer seems to have control of a number of sentence structures, at times the structures are ambiguous or clumsy, or the writer may not have taken advantage of opportunities to create a positive effect in varying or repeating sentence structures. Grammatical errors and sentence structure neither detract from nor enhance the answer.

D. HIGH: A positive effect is created by the author in the use of sentence structures. The writer seems to have control of a variety of structures and employs them effectively in communicating. Sentences are also grammatically correct and their structure enhances the quality of the answer.

### Mechanics (punctuation, capitalization, spelling)

Mechanics were to be evaluated in the following manner:

A. Not sufficient material to make an evaluation (under 75 words) or impossible to decipher.

B. LOW: Errors in capitalization, punctuation, and spelling substantially detract from the clarity or readability of the paper. The reader must stop and puzzle over words to figure out what they are or what the writer intended. Problems of mechanics detract from the impact of the answer.

C. MIDDLE: Errors in capitalization, punctuation, and spelling may be present but neither perceptibly detract from nor enhance the clarity or readability of the paper.

D. HIGH: In general, the writer capitalizes and punctuates correctly. Capitalization and punctuation are used to make the writing clear and readable. Spelling attracts little or no attention. If errors in mature words do appear, they reflect meaningful "guesses" at the words being used. Proficiency in mechanics enhances the quality of the answer.

More detailed information on these categories can be found in the Social Studies Assessment Manual and Scoring Key which was supplied to schools in June, 1989. Those who desire more information are encouraged to read the Biggs and Collis book or to contact the Social Studies Consultants at the Curriculum Development and Implementation Branch of Manitoba Education and Training.

Using the SOLO criteria and categories, the percentage of students' responses falling in each category are reported in Table 7.5.

Table 7.5

OVERALL SOLO LEVEL

| A<br>Prestructural | B<br>Unistructural | C<br>Multistructural | D<br>Relational | E<br>Extended Abstract | No Response |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 43.0% | 29.5% | 22.6% | 3.4% | 0.01% | 1.5% |

It should be emphasized that the designers of the SOLO system do not expect many students, and certainly not at the grade 8 level, to perform at either Level D or Level E. Both these levels demand sophisticated skills which go beyond the abilities of the great majority of grade 8 students. This will especially be the case where students are working within a time limit, on an item they have not previously seen, and without any chance to revise and rewrite, so that what they submit is in effect no more than a first draft. However, the Technical Advisory Committee did expect that more grade 8 students would perform at Levels B and C. Level A, for example, is not especially demanding and one would have expected to find far fewer than 43.0% of grade 8 students writing at that level. At the same time, certain factors have to be kept in mind. As already noted, students' answers could be no more than first drafts and there is considerable difference between having to write quickly under pressure and having the time to rethink, polish, and revise. In addition, teachers and students are unfamiliar with the SOLO system, which has the potential to become a valuable guide for teaching as well as for evaluation.

Even so, it seems that grade 8 students are not writing as well as they should, at least in Social Studies, and are not as skilled as they could be when it comes to organizing and presenting their ideas in coherent written form. The Technical Advisory Committee felt that not enough time and attention was being devoted to the teaching and improvement of the skills of writing as part of the Social Studies curriculum. This is, in part, a reflection of the fact that teachers find the curriculum already full, and since writing and rewriting are obviously time-consuming, they find it difficult to devote time to them. It appears, therefore, that careful thought will have to be given to the priorities and goals of the Social Studies curriculum.

On the more basic aspects of writing, the percentage of students performing in each category for sentence structure and usage are reported in Table 7.6 and for mechanics in Table 7.7.

Table 7.6

SENTENCE STRUCTURE AND USAGE

| A<br>Insufficient Data | B<br>Low | C<br>Middle | D<br>High | No Response |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8.1% | 47.1% | 34.6% | 9.0% | 1.2% |

Table 7.7

MECHANICS (PUNCTUATION, CAPITALIZATION, SPELLING)

| A<br>Insufficient Data | B<br>Low | C<br>Middle | D<br>High | No Response |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8.0% | 39.1% | 40.5% | 10.1% | 2.3% |

These two sets of findings are reasonably consistent with each other and clearly suggest that some 50% of grade 8 students experience difficulty with the basics of writing. It is encouraging to note that, to some extent, these problems have disappeared by grade 10, as shown in the results reported in the grade 10 Assessment. As common sense and experience both suggest, students' ability to write improves with age and practice. Even so, however, it is a disappointment that such a high proportion of grade 8 answers appear in Categories A and B. It can, of course, be argued that roughly half the students are writing at a satisfactory or even better level, according to the numbers in Categories C and D and this is certainly something that should not be ignored. However, the Technical Advisory Committee had expected these numbers to be higher than they proved to be, and felt that students' performance generally was below expectations. At the same time, the Committee wishes to emphasize the conditions under which the students were working. They had limited time, to a certain extent they were working under examination conditions, they were not psychologically prepared, and they submitted only a first draft. With time to rewrite and revise, it could well be that students' writing would be of a higher quality. This said, however, the Committee wondered whether students are getting enough practice in writing as part of their work in Social Studies. There are ways of covering the content of a History course in combination with teaching for skill development, especially in the case of writing, and teachers should be encouraged to use them extensively. In this regard, the recent emphasis on "language for learning" could be extremely helpful for Social Studies teachers.

## ATTITUDES AND VALUES

The formation and development of attitudes and values are a vital part of the educational process. From their very beginnings, public schools have been charged with fostering of attitudes and values in students. In the social studies, in particular, it is difficult, if not impossible, to avoid discussion of attitudes and values, since so many of the topics that are dealt with in the classroom raise items of values and choices. The Manitoba Social Studies Curriculum includes the discussion of attitudes and values as one of its key goals. The K-12 Social Studies Overview Curriculum Guide (1985) puts it this way:

> "The attitude and value skill objectives are to assist students in developing attitudes, feelings, sensitivities, interests, and values, which enable them to become more effective and responsible citizens. The attitude and value objectives include the dispositions which will help students understand and empathize with those who are different from themselves as well as help them understand their own attitudes, interests, feelings, sensitivities, and values. Students must be encouraged to examine the evidence for their positions (i.e., values, attitudes, etc.) and to defend them. The following are examples:
>
> - to develop tolerant attitudes towards other individuals and groups and, at the same time, establish some reasonable criteria for judging and discriminating among different opinions;
> - to develop a positive attitude toward their own and others' feelings;
> - to examine the variety of attitudes, feelings, values, etc., that are possible in given situations and to compare them to their own in similar situations;
> - to develop an appreciation for such procedural values as respect for truth, freedom, toleration, fairness, and rational thought.
>
> The intention of the Social Studies program is to present opportunities for students to identify, explain, and evaluate their own, as well as others', feelings, beliefs, and values. This process involves asking students to identify or recall the actions of an individual or group in a specific situation, explain why they think such behaviour occurred, infer what attitudes are implied, and analyze their own behaviour and attitudes.
>
> It also involves a process of establishing some reasonable criteria for judging different opinions. These objectives usually involve discussion or interaction of some type between students and teachers; students and students; students and community members. The objectives attempt to encourage students to express opinions, present arguments, evaluate strengths and weakness, discuss the pros and cons" (p.11).

Thus, the grade 8 Social Studies Assessment included a section dealing with attitude and value issues. This section was comprised of sixteen items (1-16). Obviously, these items do not have right or wrong answers and could not therefore be marked as correct or incorrect. They were intended to provide a rough picture of students' opinions on a range of issues and, in particular, to see to what extent this aspect of the Social Studies Curriculum was being addressed. Results on this section, presented in the Preliminary Report (1989) are analyzed in the following paragraphs.

The sixteen items can be roughly divided into various themes or points of interest. Two of them (1-2) dealt with students' attitudes towards the past and its importance. Another two (12 and 16) dealt with what might best be called feelings of personal competence. Another two (10-11) addressed environmental issues and students' attitudes towards them. Three (13-15) addressed different aspects of the developing world. Finally, seven items (3-9) asked for students' opinions about particular aspects or personalities of the past as covered in the grade 8 program. For convenience and clarity of discussion, it will be useful to analyze the items according to these different points of interest.

Insofar as attitudes to the past are concerned, the grade 8 program appears to be successful. Eighty point four percent (80.4%) of students either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that present-day society has been influenced by past civilizations (item 1), and 60.7% also agreed or strongly agreed that people should be concerned about the loss of customs and traditions. In one sense these results might seem trite and even obvious, but they must be seen in the context of all the evidence that suggests that students at the grade 8 level or thereabouts are not especially interested in or concerned about the past, but are, rather, intensely present-minded (Osborne, 1975). Seen in this light, it is encouraging to note that grade 8 students in Manitoba do recognize the role and importance of the past. There is also some encouraging evidence from the Social Participation section of the Assessment, to be discussed below, that students are linking their study of the past with present-day concerns.

Two items dealt with what is being described here as feelings of personal competence. One (item 16) asked students how they felt about the future; the other (item 12) asked for their views on people's right to criticize their government. In response to item 16, 59.3% of students indicated that they felt optimistic about the future, though it is worth noting that of this 59.3%, only 18.2% said that they were "very" optimistic, with the remaining 41.1% being only "fairly" optimistic. In one sense, this can be seen as discouraging, indicating, as it does, that approximately 40% of grade 8 students do not feel optimistic about the future. The actual figures were as follows: 24.9% were undecided; 10.5% were fairly pessimistic and 4.1% were very pessimistic. There is something disturbing about the fact that so many grade 8 students apparently see the future in such negative terms. However, the Assessment shows a picture that is less depressing than that provided by international research in recent years, which has shown teenagers to hold very bleak views of the future, which they see as threatened by the prospects of nuclear war, environmental destruction and economic problems (Davies, 1986). Manitoba students, it seems, are less discouraged than those elsewhere, even though some 40% of them are not prepared to express a clear sense of optimism.

The other item that addressed the issue of personal competence, though somewhat less directly, asked whether students agreed or disagreed with the statement that citizens should have the right to criticize their government. Seventy-seven point eight percent (77.8%) of students either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. This is encouraging evidence that Manitoba students share a fundamental democratic value, although one should also note that some 22% were either undecided (11.7%) or expressed disagreement (10.2%).

Two items on this section of the Assessment (items 10 and 11) addressed environmental issues and here, as at other grade levels, students voiced a strong commitment to respecting the environment. When asked whether or not the benefits of industrial development outweigh the negative effects of possible pollution, 62.9% of students either disagreed or strongly disagreed. Eighteen point one percent (18.1%) were undecided and 18.8% disagreed. What is not clear, of course, is the extent to which students might be willing to make personal sacrifices in order to respect the principle they support. There is some evidence in the grade 4 as well as the grade 10 assessments that students' commitment to principles weakens when they are faced with choices that demand personal sacrifice. Of course, this is not especially surprising; it is a phenomenon that is common in adults also and one which most of us share to some extent or other. On another aspect of the environment, students were overwhelmingly of the opinion that we should be more concerned about the destruction of the world's rainforests. Eighty-eight point five percent (88.5%) of students agreed with this statement, with 56.0% of them strongly agreeing. Only 5.6% were undecided and 5.5% disagreed. This item (item 11) attracted the most unequivocal support of any in this section of the Assessment.

Three items (13-15) dealt with the developing world and students showed a strong degree of understanding and sympathy for the problems faced by developing countries. For example, 63.5% of students disagreed with the suggestion that wealthy nations should limit foreign aid to poorer countries with "excessive population growth", with another 21.6% of students being undecided (item 15). Sixty-three point five percent (63.5%) of students also disagreed with the suggestion that Canada should allow "fewer Third World people" into the country as immigrants, with 19.9% undecided, and 34.7% actually agreeing. This last figure does raise some concerns, indicating, as it does, that just over one-third of students may be concerned about some aspects of immigration. The Assessment does not provide any insight into students' thinking, but there may be at least a suggestion of racism here. Finally, item 13 asked students to respond to a statement that poor developing nations should create armed forces to reduce unemployment. This particular item obviously raises some very complex issues and calls for them to be weighed against each other. Not surprisingly, it attracted the highest number of undecideds (31.9%). Forty point one percent (40.1%) of students indicated disagreement, and 27.5% agreed.

Finally, the Attitudes and Values section of the Assessment contained seven items (items 3-9) which required students to present an opinion on some person or aspect of the past. These items were all designed so as to be consistent with particular objectives of the grade 8 Social Studies program. For the most part, the responses revealed a fair degree of student agreement. For example, 60.5% disagreed with the statement that life in a prehistoric village was more comfortable than life in a Greek or Roman city (item 4); 72.8% felt that people who practised human sacrifice could not be called civilized (item 5); 75.2% agreed that workers had good reasons to form unions during the Industrial Revolution. Items that called for a specific judgment on a particular individual got a more mixed response, with a large proportion of undecideds. For example, 50.7% of students thought that Leonardo da Vinci's ideas influenced his society (item 6), but 26.0% were undecided and 22.6% disagreed. Similarly, when asked to respond to a statement that Luther broke with the church in order to achieve personal glory, 46.8% disagreed, but 27.5% were undecided, and 26% agreed. These were the kinds of items that drew the largest number of undecided responses, presumably because they were seen as calling for specific knowledge. After item 13, which has been discussed above, item 9 attracted the next highest proportion of undecided answers, with 31.2% of students being unable or unwilling to state an opinion as to whether or not labour unions today should be more powerful or influential. Interestingly, 50.5% of students agreed that they should be, while 17.9% thought that they should not. In general, however, most students were willing to express personal opinions. Over the sixteen items in the Attitudes and Values section, there was an average undecided response of 20.9%, ranging from a high of 31.9% (item 13) to a low of 5.6% (item 11).

## SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

Social participation is one of the goals of the K-12 Social Studies Curriculum and, as such, is reflected in the goals and objectives of the grade 8 Social Studies program. The K-12 Social Studies Overview (1985) describes social participation in these terms:

> "The social participation skill objectives are designed to help develop informed people who will participate actively in society (i.e., to criticize it constructively and to work to improve it where necessary) and participate effectively with others to achieve mutual goals. They are concerned with the relationship and interaction of one student with another or with a group in or out of school. Examples of social participation skills are stated below:
>
> - helping and working with other students;
> - participating and interacting positively in classroom activities such as discussions, debates, presentations, and projects;
> - participating and working effectively with others in groups and organizations to achieve mutual goals such as student councils, community agencies or organizations;
> - participating actively in society, i.e., participating in volunteer work that helps young children, the elderly, ill, handicapped; participating in (or observing) efforts directed toward solving some community problems; criticizing society constructively and working to improve it where necessary; participating in a political campaign of a candidate of the student's own choice, writing letters to elected officials, etc" (pp.11-12).

It will be seen that, broadly speaking, social participation falls into two categories: one, participation inside the classroom; and two, participation outside it. The first is descriptive of the open classroom, centred upon active learning and with a high degree of student involvement. The second describes the kind of informed, involved citizenship that the social studies curriculum is intended to encourage.

The grade 8 Assessment devoted twelve items (17-28) to social participation, of which nine (17-25) asked students to describe the extent to which they were involved in their own learning inside their classrooms, and three (26-28) dealt with the impact of the grade 8 program on students outside the classroom. The following analyses are based on the responses provided by students published in the Preliminary Report (1989).

The responses to items 17-25 reveal a pattern of classroom learning in which students report that they play a reasonably active part. For example, 86.3% of students report that discussion is part of their social studies lessons at least once a week - and 66.3% report that discussion occurs just about every day. By contrast, only 5.7% report that it occurs only a few times a year or not at all (item 17). Sixty-five point five percent (65.5%) of students report that they discuss current events at least once a week, and if one drops this frequency to at least once a month, then the percentage rises to 83.0% (item 18). Both of these responses indicate classrooms with a healthy degree of discussion and student involvement.

Group work in the classroom, however, appears to be less common. Although 76.1% of students either agree or strongly agree that they like doing group projects, only 18.4% report that they work in small groups at least once a week. This percentage rises to 53.6% if group work is reported as being done at least once a month. Thirty-two point seven percent (32.7%) of students report that they are involved in group work only a few times a year, and 13.0% report that they are never so engaged (item 19). Group activities such as skits, role-playing and other co-operative experiential work occur less often: 31.2% of students say that they are so involved a few times a year, while 52.4% say that they never do such things (item 20). Similarly, the response to item 22 indicates that 43.7% of students are involved in class presentations or reports only a few times a year, with another 28.7% never being so engaged. Twenty-two point four percent (22.4%) of students report that they make class presentations at least once a month, with another 4.5% doing so at least weekly. Students were also asked how often they assumed the role of a person from the past (item 21): 67.6% said never, 23.2% said a few times a year, and 8.8% said at least once a month or more frequently.

Visiting speakers and field trips are apparently used less often. Sixty-one point five percent (61.5%) of students reported that visiting speakers never came to their classes, while 32.4% said that they heard speakers at least a few times a year (item 24). Seventy-three point seven percent (73.7%) of students reported that they never went on visits or field trips, while 21.3% said that they did so at least a few times a year (item 25).

## OBSERVATIONS AND DISCUSSION

The conclusion that emerges most strikingly from the section of the Assessment devoted to knowledge of facts and generalizations is that students performed much better on the earlier units of the program than on the later. As already noted, this is consistent with the common observation that many grade 8 classes spend much more time on these units. It is not unusual to see classrooms which by Christmas have only just completed the study of ancient civilizations. As a result, less time is available for the study of later units, with the results that are apparent on this Assessment.

It is noticeable also that students for the most part do better when an item calls for a clear, black-and-white factual response than when it calls for the puzzling out of a relationship or the assessment of a number of factors. This is, of course, not unexpected since such items are by their very nature more complex in both their content and wording. It is also consistent with what we know of the way in which many grade 8 students typically think, with their unease with the abstract and their relative comfort with the concrete and specific. This is not to say that such students cannot work with the abstract and the complex, but rather that many of them do not do so without careful teaching and preparation.

There is also some evidence in the responses to this section of the Assessment that students are not as conversant as one might have expected, with key terms, names, and concepts. There appear to be wide variations in what students do or do not know and it might well be that this reflects what they have been taught. It must also be remembered that the Assessment was done at the very end of the school year and, therefore, that students could easily have forgotten material that they had learned earlier, especially since the Assessment did not take the form of a final examination requiring review and special study. It can happen that history is taught in a way such that each unit is dealt with sequentially but in isolation, so that there is little opportunity for review and the cumulative reinforcement of knowledge. History, indeed, has been described as "one damned thing after another" and if students learn it in this way, it is certainly possible that they will not remember important items of information.

To help avoid this, teachers should do everything possible to help students review and remember information learned previously. This can be done through frequent cross-referencing and comparison. For example, Luther could be compared to Socrates; the Renaissance provides obvious links to the ancient world; the Industrial Revolution can be contrasted with feudalism; and so on. Much of this can be done informally by the teacher. It can also be built into assignments and activities. In addition, key information can be reinforced visually through pictures, wall displays, time-charts, posters, and so on. In these and other ways, students can be helped to form a coherent and cumulative picture of their year's work as it proceeds, so that it does not become a meaningless jumble of disconnected information.

The Curriculum Guide for the grade 8 program does contain what it describes as "focusing questions" which are intended to help teachers plan their teaching around what is considered to be the essential content of each unit. In addition, the Curriculum Guide contains fairly specific objectives for each unit. For instance, the knowledge objectives for the Reformation Era contain such items as "identify some causes of the Reformation..." and "identify the important leaders of the Reformation and list their contributions". One can find such objectives throughout the Curriculum Guide in all topics and, short of listing every specific fact, it is difficult to know what more could be done to assist teachers. The combination of the specifications of the Curriculum Guide and the content of the textbook should be sufficient to make clear what is expected to be taught. Research elsewhere suggests that many teachers organize their teaching not around a curriculum guide but around the textbook since this is something they use virtually every day and that they share with the students. One wonders if this is happening here in Manitoba also. If so, it is to be regretted, since the Curriculum Guide provides a valuable service in helping to organize planning and teaching. Indeed, according to the data obtained in the Teacher Survey, close to 80% of grade 8 teachers rate it as satisfactory or very satisfactory, and 74.1% say the same about the Guide's description of topics and focusing questions. It is impossible on the basis of the Assessment data to know exactly why students did not remember some basic knowledge. It is however, at least possible that this reveals a situation in which such knowledge may not be stressed to students and reviewed at regular intervals in order to provide necessary reinforcement. If this is the case, the Curriculum Guide could be extremely useful in helping teachers organize their courses.

Perhaps the most important conclusion to be drawn from this section of the Assessment is that the later units of the grade 8 program do not appear to be achieving their objective. The Assessment does not provide any information as to why this should be so. We do not know whether the problem is with the textbook, the curriculum, the students or the teachers, but we do know that there appears to be a problem.

What sort of picture emerges of grade 8 students' proficiency in thinking and research skills? First, it seems that some two-thirds of students can adequately handle the basic skills involved in comprehension. Such, at least, is the conclusion to be drawn from the fact that 69.5% of students successfully answered items requiring the understanding of information presented to them in written form. Second, this figure drops to roughly 60% when skills of a somewhat higher order are involved, for example deciding on the verifiability and objectivity of a source or a statement or applying a conclusion in a new setting. Third, this figure in turn drops to about one-half when students are asked to work with visual or pictorial information or to evaluate sources of information for reliability or objectivity. Fourth, about one-half of grade 8 students performed below expectations on the essay portion of the Assessment.

How these findings are interpreted obviously depends upon one's expectations. At least one-half of grade 8 students are apparently being well served by the grade 8 Social Studies program. These students are meeting the thinking and research skill objectives of the program. Indeed, so far as basic skills are concerned, this number is more in the neighbourhood of two-thirds. At the same time, the program is apparently not achieving the objectives with roughly one-half of the students. It must, of course, always be kept in mind that we are talking here about grade 8 students and, therefore, we should ensure that our expectations are not unrealistic. Nonetheless, the Assessment was designed, pilot-tested, and implemented with this in mind and the Technical Advisory Committee believes that the items were fair and representative both of the curriculum and of the expected performance of grade 8 students. The evidence from the Assessment suggests very strongly that students had little difficulty in understanding the items and knowing what was expected. There were reports that in some cases students did not take the Assessment seriously as it did not "count for marks". Indeed, there is reason to suspect that in some cases teachers and administrators did not take the Assessment seriously and this must surely have had an effect on students.

However, although it is impossible to be absolutely certain, it is probable that where students are experiencing difficulty in achieving the skill objectives of the program, it is because the relevant skills are not being adequately taught. There is evidence from other jurisdictions that much teaching, in the Social Studies as in other subjects, is still dominated by low-level items, worksheets, and an emphasis upon factual information for its own sake (Goodlad, 1984). It is at least possible that this is also the situation in Manitoba, though obviously not in all classrooms. Indeed, if Cuban (1984) is right in associating this pattern of "persistent instruction" (to use his term) with the working conditions to be found in most schools (one textbook; thirty or so students in a class; a fairly rigid timetable; and so on), then there is no reason to suppose that Manitoba is exempt. It is, of course, difficult to work on skills development if a teacher uses no resources beyond the prescribed textbook, or if he or she has many other subjects to prepare, as is typically the case in smaller schools. Skills development might also be unfamiliar to those teachers who have been assigned to teach social studies but who have no appropriate background or training in the subject, an issue which will be examined in the chapter of this report dealing with the Teacher Survey. In any event, for these and no doubt other reasons, it seems that the grade 8 Social Studies program is not yet meeting its skill objectives in the case of roughly one-half of students. While there is no sudden and dramatic solution to this problem, there are things that can be done, as suggested in the recommendations at the end of this chapter.

All in all, the responses to the section of the Assessment dealing with attitudes and values present an encouraging picture. Most students are able to state an opinion and the opinions themselves give no immediate cause for concern. Students appear to have a commitment to the past; they also voice concern for the environment and for the developing world. There might be some cause for concern in the substantial minority of students who apparently do not hold high hopes for the future and who support (at least potentially) restrictions on immigration from developing countries, but the available data make it difficult to arrive at any unambiguous conclusions. Overall, however, it seems that in the area of Attitudes and Values the grade 8 Social Studies program is achieving its objectives. It might be possible in future years to reduce the rate of undecided responses below the approximately 20% that appeared on the Assessment, but this rate is not altogether unreasonable, and it appears to be something more than just an automatic response by uninterested students. It is notable, for example, that on complex items calling for the weighing of difficult issues or which relied on specific knowledge, the undecided rate increased markedly. On the other hand, on relatively straightforward items, it dropped. Evidence such as this suggests, though it can never prove, that students took the items seriously and gave a considered answer.

The findings flowing from the social participation objectives are not dissimilar to those of the grade 10 Assessment and they reveal a picture of classrooms in which there is a fairly high degree of discussion and attention to current events; a somewhat lower but still acceptable frequency of group work and other forms of student involvement; and a much lower use of visiting speakers and field trips. The Technical Advisory Committee concluded that, while it thought there was some room for an increased amount of group work and of group-based activities (role-playing, reports, and so on), these findings were acceptable. The Committee noted that speakers and field trips caused particular problems in that they were often disruptive of school schedules and were, in any event, often difficult to organize. Smaller schools also face particular problems in this regard, given their distance from appropriate resources, especially in view of the nature of the grade 8 program. It was pointed out, also, that activity-based learning had the potential for creating problems of control and discipline and thus were viewed with some caution by teachers of grade 8 students. The Technical Advisory Committee also noted that teachers feel that the grade 8 program contains a considerable amount of subject-matter, to the extent that they were sometimes reluctant to employ methods that would slow their classes down and thus make it more difficult to complete the course. Nonetheless, the Committee believes that with careful planning, this problem can usually be solved.

None of this should be taken to imply that student-centred or activity-based learning is good simply for its own sake. It is obvious that a group activity can be a waste of time and educationally pointless unless it is carefully planned and organized and devoted to a worthwhile objective. Similarly, an interesting and stimulating lecture is more useful than an aimless skit or a role-playing exercise. The key to good teaching and successful learning is to be found in an appropriate combination of teaching strategies which speak to students' needs and capacities, not in an excessive reliance on any one approach. Nonetheless, all that we know about how adolescent students learn, and how they think and interact, points us in the direction of involving them directly and actively in their own learning. In this regard, and especially at the grade 8 level, the Middle Years Sourcebook (1984) is a valuable guide.

The Social Participation section of the Assessment also included three items (26-28) which asked students whether, or to what extent, the grade 8 program influenced their activities outside the classroom. Thus, for example, item 26 asked students whether, as part of their Social Studies program, they had helped other people. Sixty point five percent (60.5%) of students said that this never happened, though 17.8% said that it happened a few times a year, and another 19.5% said that it happened even more often than this. In response to item 27, 83.9% of students said that Social Studies had on at least a few occasions influenced them to watch particular television programs, read newspapers or magazines, or discuss issues with friends. Fifty-one point five percent (51.5%) of students reported that they were more likely to become involved in issues affecting the planet and society as a result of the Social Studies program (item 28). Twenty-five percent (25.0%) reported that there would be no change, and, somewhat puzzlingly, 19.0% reported that they were less likely to be so involved.

All in all, these results are not unexpected. It is still unusual for students to be involved in social participation activities outside the classroom as part of their social studies program, so the response to item 26 was not surprising. The responses to items 27 and 28 are definitely encouraging: it appears that students are making a connection between their study of the past and what is happening in today's world and that they are, with some exceptions, being influenced by the social studies program and by their teachers to take an active interest in the world around them.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on the results of the grade 8 written test.

1. Teachers of grade 8 Social Studies should be encouraged to devote adequate time to the later units of the program.

2. Manitoba Education and Training, and the teacher education institutions, should draw teachers' attention to the role and use of the Curriculum guide as a means of course planning.

3. Teachers' attention should be drawn to the importance of identifying the essential terms, facts, and concepts to be taught in any given unit, and of making them clear to students.

4. Teachers should be encouraged to design and use evaluation methods that require students to draw upon knowledge and skills cumulatively throughout the year.

5. Teachers should do whatever possible to review and reinforce students' knowledge of key items of subject matter, for example, through charts, wall displays, pictures, time-charts, and other such stimuli.

6. Teachers should provide students with frequent opportunity to review material learned previously and to connect it to material currently being studied, with the intent that students form a coherent picture of their year's work as a whole.

7. Manitoba Education and Training, together with the appropriate professional organizations and the teacher education institutions, should help teachers to find ways of combining the teaching of subject matter with skill development.

8. Inservice planners should make every effort to ensure that skills' development in social studies becomes a major theme of inservice and professional development.

9. Manitoba Education and Training should continue to draw attention to the value of the Curriculum Assessment support materials for Social Studies (also known as CAST) in connection with the Social Studies program.

10. The teacher-training institutions should be consulted with a view to ensuring that new Social Studies teachers are fully aware of the importance of skills development in the Social Studies.

11. Teachers should be encouraged to make more use of visual and pictorial material as a vehicle for skills development in social studies.

12. Teachers should be encouraged to put greater emphasis upon the teaching of writing skills as part of their teaching of social studies.

13. Manitoba Education and Training, teacher-training institutions, and inservice planners should ensure that the SOLO method of evaluating written work is drawn to the attention of teachers and student teachers as a useful method of teaching and evaluating writing in the social studies.

14. Manitoba Education and Training should consult with the Manitoba Social Science Teachers Association, the universities, school divisions, and other appropriate bodies, to direct attention to the importance of skills development in social studies.

15. Manitoba Education and Training should continue to draw attention to the importance of the Attitudes and Values objectives of the Social Studies Curriculum.

16. Teachers should continue to engage students in the exploration and development of attitudes and values relevant to the subject-matter of the curriculum.

17. The teacher-training institutions should continue to draw the attention of student teachers to the Attitude and Value objectives of the curriculum.

18. Manitoba Education and Training should continue to draw to the attention of teachers the importance of the Social Participation goals of the Social Studies curriculum.

19. The teacher-training institutions should make student-teachers fully aware of the implications and means of implementation of the Social Participation objectives of the curriculum.

20. Teachers should be encouraged to make greater use of group work, speakers, and trips on topics relevant to the curriculum.

21. School administrators and trustees should be encouraged to eliminate the obstacles that now exist in the planning for and use of speakers and field trips.

22. Teachers should be encouraged to place more emphasis on involving students actively in their own learning.

23. Manitoba Education and Training should take whatever steps are needed to ensure the implementation of the above recommendations.

# CHAPTER 8

# Grade Eight Teacher Survey

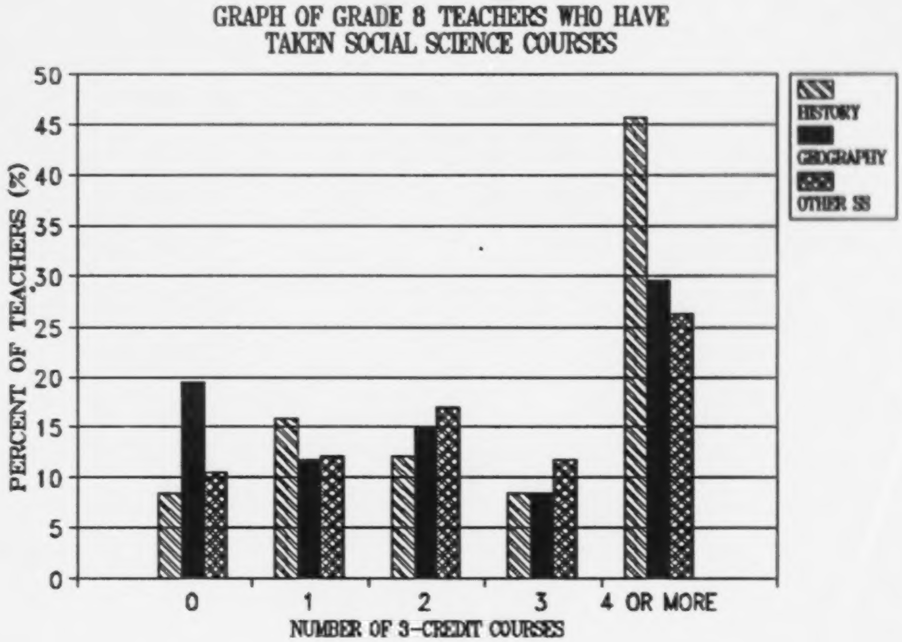
The grade 8 Teacher Survey was sent to a sample of 295 teachers of grade 8 Social Studies. Two hundred and forty-seven (247) completed surveys were returned, making for a response rate of 83.7%.

## SURVEY RESULTS

### TEACHER BACKGROUND

As at other grade levels, teachers were asked to describe their academic and professional background in terms of courses taken in History, Geography, and other social sciences. The results showed that approximately one-half of the teachers teaching the grade 8 Social Studies program have three or fewer three-credit courses of related background. Figure 8.1 below presents teachers' responses.

Figure 8.1



Specifically, by subject, these figures indicate that 44.9% of Social Studies teachers have taken three or fewer three-credit courses in History. For Geography, the equivalent figure is 54.6% and for other social sciences 51.3%. It seems, then, that a surprisingly high proportion of grade 8 teachers do not have much university training in their subject. It is often rumoured that Social Studies is seen as a subject that anyone can teach and that, therefore, teachers are sometimes more or less randomly assigned to it. The figures reported have suggested that there might be some substance to this view. It can only restrict the kinds of teaching that are possible if, in fact, teachers, no matter what their strengths in other areas, are not adequately trained in their subjects. And, in this regard, it must be remembered that a criterion of three 3-credit courses is substantially less than even a university minor which normally consists of 18 credits. At the same time, however, it must be noted that 87.0% of the teachers surveyed reported that they felt qualified to teach the grade 8 course, with only 7.3% saying that they felt unqualified and 5.7% not responding. When asked if, given a choice, they would choose to teach the course, 80.6% of teachers said that they would, and 13.4% said they would not, with 6.1% not responding. Whatever their level of university training, teachers do not apparently feel themselves to be at a disadvantage when it comes to teaching the grade 8 course. Nonetheless, it is quite possible that teachers do not realize the potential of history as a discipline, or the potential of the grade 8 course in particular, if they have not received a thorough training in the appropriate subject matter and pedagogy.

## SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

Teachers were asked to respond to three questions on school organization:

| | | Non-Semestered | Semestered | No Response |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| A. | Is the course you teach non-semestered or semestered? . . . . . . . . . . | 94.3% | 1.2% | 4.5% |

| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Other (specify) | No Response |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| B. | How many days are in 1 cycle of your timetable? | - | - | .8% | 4.0% | 13.4% | 72.9% | 4.0% | 4.9% |

| | | Non-Semestered Courses | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Less Than 105 | 105-140 | 141-175 | 176-210 | 211-240 | Over 240 | No Response |
| C. | How many minutes per cycle (per class) do you teach Social Studies? | 6.9% | 8.5% | 6.5% | 21.5% | 35.6% | 14.6% | 6.5% |
| | | Semestered Courses | | | | | | |
| | | Less Than 210 | 211-280 | 281-350 | 351-420 | 421-480 | Over 480 | No Response |
| | | - | .8% | - | .4% | .4% | - | 98.4% |

The responses to this part of the Survey indicated that, at the grade 8 level, the vast majority of schools are non-semestered and that most run on a 6-day cycle. This reflects a different pattern from the grade 10 results, which show a much higher proportion of semestered schools, and obviously arises from the different background and tradition of junior high/middle schools and senior high schools.

There appears to be a puzzling variation in the amounts of time schools devote to the grade 8 Social Studies course. A little over half of the teachers (57.1%) report that they spend between 176 and 240 minutes per cycle on the grade 8 course, which would represent approximately 30 - 50 minutes per day, depending on whether one uses a 5-day or a 6-day cycle as the basis of calculation. These schools presumably represent the norm of spending one classroom period per day on Social Studies. Fourteen point six percent (14.6%) of teachers report that they spend more time than this on the grade 8 course, but 21.9% report spending less than 175 minutes per cycle. In other words, over one-fifth of the province's classrooms spent surprisingly little time on grade 8 Social Studies. In this connection, it must be remembered that the Administrative Handbook specifies that 175 minutes per 5-day week should be devoted to Social Studies. Obviously, not all schools are achieving this. One wonders if the students who did not do as well as expected on the Assessment are to be found primarily in such schools. Recent research has substantiated the common-sense observation that the more time students spend on a task, the more successfully they are likely to do it. In grade 8 Social Studies, it seems, students' time-on-task is not always what it should be.

Teachers were also asked to what extent they were able to influence various decisions concerning the organization of teaching and courses. The results are reported below:

To what degree are you able to influence the following decisions?

| | | Great Influence | Some Influence | Little or No Influence | No Response |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Allocation of time for Social Studies | 17.0% | 21.9% | 56.3% | 4.9% |
| 2. | Allocation of time to specific topics | 67.6 | 22.7 | 5.3 | 4.5 |
| 3. | Text book choice | 34.8 | 36.4 | 24.3 | 4.5 |
| 4. | Selecting support material | 69.6 | 23.1 | 2.0 | 5.3 |
| 5. | Teaching strategies | 84.2 | 9.3 | 2.0 | 4.5 |
| 6. | Evaluation of student progress | 78.9 | 15.4 | 1.2 | 4.5 |
| 7. | Inservice activities | 15.0 | 58.3 | 22.3 | 4.5 |

Not surprisingly, the area of least influence was the allocation of time to the Social Studies, where 56.3% of teachers reported having little or no influence. Since school timetables are generally drawn up by the school administration, with little teacher involvement, this finding is not unexpected. Perhaps more surprising is that 38.9% of teachers report having at least some or a great influence in this area. Twenty-four point three percent (24.3%) of teachers report having little or no influence over the selection of textbooks but this probably represents those situations where teachers move into a school where the textbooks are already in use and are unlikely to be replaced for some time.

Teachers report having great influence over such immediate classroom considerations as the selection of support material, teaching strategies, and evaluation procedures. Perhaps the most troubling finding of this part of the Survey is that so few teachers (15%) report having great influence over the organization of inservice activities.

When teachers were asked to indicate whether they taught their Social Studies in a semestered or a non-semestered setting, 94.3% indicated that they taught in a non-semestered setting, 1.2% in a semestered setting, and 4.5% did not respond. When asked to respond to the amount of time spent teaching the overview unit as well as each of the four units of the curriculum, 45% to 49% of teachers did not respond to the overview and Unit IV while 33% to 35% did not respond to Units I, II, and III. It is difficult to know why, but one could assume that this was because teachers who did not teach certain units simply did not respond to these items.

Comparing the response rates provided by teachers in semestered classes to the suggested time for each unit in the curriculum leads to some interesting comparisons. The curriculum guide provides suggested time allotments for each of the four units which in total make up 70% (28 weeks) of the school year. No time is specifically allotted to the Overview and the range in the responses provided by 51% of the teachers can be summarized as follows:

| | | Reported Time Spent | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Suggested Time Allotment | 1-1.5 weeks | 2-3 weeks | 4-8 weeks | 9 weeks or more |
| Overview: People Through the Ages | - | 28% | 43.2% | 24.8% | 4% |

The suggested time for Unit I is 4 weeks. The summary of the allotment results provided by 67% of the teachers responding is as follows:

| | | Reported Time Spent | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Suggested Time Allotment | 1-2 weeks | 3-5 weeks | 6-8 weeks | 9 weeks or more |
| Unit I: Prehistoric and Early Historic Life | 4 weeks | 3% | 26.7% | 48.5% | 21.7% |

The suggested time allotment for Unit II, Ancient Civilizations, is 8 weeks. The reported time spent by 67% of the teachers surveyed is summarized as follows:

| | | Reported Time Spent | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Suggested Time Allotment | 2-5.5 weeks | 6-10 weeks | 11-30 weeks |
| Unit II: Ancient Civilizations | 8 weeks | 11.4% | 53.6% | 34.9% |

Sixty-five percent (65%) of teachers surveyed provided information as to the time spent on Unit III, Life in Early Modern Europe. The suggested time allotment was 8 weeks. Reported time allotments follow:

| | | Reported Time Spent | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Suggested Time Allotment | 2-5.5 weeks | 6-10 weeks | 11-18 weeks |
| Unit III: Life in Early Modern Europe | 8 weeks | 18% | 60.3% | 21.7% |

On Unit IV, 55% of teachers provided information on time allocation. The suggested time allotment was 8 weeks as it was for Units II and III. Reported time allotments varied as follows:

| | | Reported Time Spent | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Suggested Time Allotment | 1-5 weeks | 6-10 weeks | 11-16 weeks |
| Unit IV: Life in the Modern World | 8 weeks | 40.2% | 53.3% | 5.8% |

As can be seen from the above analyses, there is considerable variation in the amount of time spent in any given unit of the grade 8 curriculum. Even taking into account the unallocated 30% of the school year, one wonders why up to 40% of teachers are allocating differences nearly greater than the 30% of unallocated time to Units II, III, or IV, why there is such variation in the time spent on the overview, and why nearly 70% of teachers almost double the amount of time spent on Unit I. Considering the information provided above, one explanation for under-allocation of time by some teachers could be found in the fact that over 20% of the province's classrooms did not receive the required minimum time to be devoted to Social Studies. However, considering that 90.3% of teachers report below that they have a great (67.6%) or some (22.7%) influence in the allocation of time to specific topics, it still leaves one to wonder why so many units receive an over-allocation of time by so many teachers.

## RATIONALE FOR TEACHING SOCIAL STUDIES

Over the years there have been many different philosophies for the teaching of Social Studies and the Teacher Survey attempted to find out what grade 8 teachers thought should be the main goals of Social Studies. The response rates to the six items related to this topic are presented below:

There are various views on the role of Social Studies in the curriculum. Please indicate your views on each of the goal statements below.

| | | Strongly Agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | No Response |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A. | The main task of Social Studies is to preserve and transmit cultural heritage | 13.0% | 55.9% | 12.1% | 11.3% | 1.2% | 6.5% |
| B. | Social Studies should teach students to make rational decisions about personal and social issues | 33.2 | 56.7 | 4.0 | .8 | - | 5.3 |
| C. | Social Studies should provide learners both with an awareness of possible futures and the roles they might play in developing these futures | 29.6 | 58.7 | 4.9 | 1.6 | - | 5.3 |
| D. | Social Studies should provide students with the skills necessary to become independent learners | 38.9 | 48.2 | 6.5 | 1.2 | - | 5.3 |
| E. | Social Studies should teach a body of tested principles and generalizations about human relations and societies | 15.0 | 49.4 | 23.1 | 6.5 | .4 | 5.7 |
| F. | Social Studies should help students understand the structure of the social sciences | 9.7 | 51.4 | 26.7 | 6.5 | .4 | 5.3 |

As in grade 10, most grade 8 teachers appear to see Social Studies as contributing primarily to the development of students' decision-making skills and personal autonomy. Such at least is the conclusion to be drawn from the distribution of the "strongly agree" responses, which are concentrated upon items B, C, and D. Teachers apparently are less committed to the preservation of cultural heritage and to what might be called the teaching of the social sciences. There is perhaps, in the responses to this part of the survey, an indication that teachers see their task primarily in individualistic terms, as consisting of helping students to cope better with the issues that confront them, and not so much in societal terms, as contributing to a sense of citizenship and communal responsibilities. To the extent that this is the case, it indicates that the Social Studies program is not achieving all its objectives, at least not insofar as the social participation goals are concerned.

## CURRICULUM GUIDE AND RELATED INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Eighty-three percent (83.0%) of teachers indicated that they were using the 1986 Curriculum Guide, though 9.7% said they were not, without indicating what they were using, and 7.3% did not respond. The following data indicate that, overall, almost 75% of teachers found the curriculum guide either satisfactory or very satisfactory. It is interesting to note, in view of the observation made in the preceding section of this report, that the most unsatisfactory part of the guide was that part which deals with social participation objectives, although even here only 13.0% reported it as unsatisfactory. One should also note that the proportion of "no response" returns was higher than might be expected on this section, and, indeed, on those that follow. It is difficult to know what to make of this, except to note the implication that some teachers apparently did not take the survey all that seriously. The above discussion is based on the survey results reported in the items below:

A. Are you using the 1986 Guide for Grade 8? Yes 83.0% No 9.7% NR 7.3%

B. How would you rate the 1986 Grade 8 Curriculum Guide on:

| | | Very Satisfactory | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | No Opinion | No Response |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Social Studies K-12 Guide Overview? | 6.1% | 65.2% | 3.2% | 10.9% | 14.6% |
| 2. | Grade Eight Overview? | 10.9 | 68.8 | 2.4 | 5.3 | 12.6 |
| 3. | Unit Overview? | 13.8 | 64.4 | 4.0 | 5.3 | 12.6 |
| 4. | Topics and Focusing Questions? | 13.4 | 60.7 | 7.3 | 4.9 | 13.8 |
| 5. | Knowledge Objectives? | 13.4 | 61.5 | 4.9 | 6.1 | 14.2 |
| 6. | Thinking and Research Skills Objectives? | 13.8 | 60.3 | 5.3 | 7.3 | 13.4 |
| 7. | Attitude & Value Objectives? | 11.7 | 59.9 | 7.3 | 6.5 | 14.6 |
| 8. | Social Participation Objectives? | 11.7 | 55.1 | 13.0 | 6.1 | 14.2 |
| 9. | Suggested Teaching Strategies and Learning Activities? | 11.7 | 55.5 | 12.1 | 5.3 | 15.4 |
| 10. | Suggested Learning Resources | 10.1 | 57.9 | 9.3 | 8.1 | 14.6 |
| 11. | Suggested Strategies for Evaluation of Students? | 7.7 | 57.5 | 8.9 | 9.3 | 16.6 |
| 12. | How would you rate the grade 8 Curriculum Guide overall? | 9.7 | 64.8 | 5.7 | 3.2 | 16.6 |

As with the curriculum guide, most teachers reported the textbook to be generally satisfactory, with only 9.7% describing it as unsatisfactory. (See item 1 below.)

| | | Very Satisfactory | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | No Opinion | No Response |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Approved text: Human Heritage | 17.8% | 52.2% | 9.7% | 6.1% | 14.2% |

The same general pattern is to be seen in teachers' assessment of resources (see items 2 and 3 below), although the high proportion of "no opinion" responses should be noted. This presumably indicates that a reasonably substantial minority of teachers do not use this resource, although the survey provides no data as to why this might be so. It is not clear, for example, whether these teachers simply do not choose to use Department of Education and Training resources, or whether they would like to do so but are deterred by problems of distance, accessibility, ordering, and so on. It could be that the failure to use such resources is another reflection of those classrooms which are not making adequate use of the full range of teaching strategies in Social Studies, a point which is raised in the next section of this report:

| | | Very Satisfactory | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | No Opinion | No Response |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2. | Classroom supplementary resources | 5.7% | 55.1% | 19.0% | 8.1% | 12.1% |
| 3. | Department of Education resources: | | | | | |
| | a) Education Manitoba | 1.2 | 47.0 | 6.1 | 28.3 | 17.4 |
| | b) Manitoba Textbook Catalogue | 1.6 | 48.2 | 8.1 | 25.9 | 16.2 |
| | c) Library - Video Tapes | 2.0 | 37.2 | 17.0 | 27.1 | 16.6 |
| | d) Library - Print Materials | 2.4 | 40.1 | 8.1 | 31.6 | 17.8 |
| | e) Library - MERC | 1.6 | 24.3 | 6.1 | 46.6 | 21.5 |

## TEACHING ACTIVITIES

Grade 8 teachers were asked to report on the frequency with which different kinds of teaching strategies were used in their classrooms. Their responses to the items in this section of the survey are reported below:

How often does each of these activities happen in your Social Studies class or as a part of your Social Studies course?

| | | Daily | Weekly | Monthly | A Few Times a Year | Never | No Response |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Teacher presents information most of the class period while students listen or take notes | 10.1% | 49.0% | 10.5% | 13.4% | 6.1% | 10.9% |
| 2. | Students express or defend their opinions on different sides of an issue during class | 14.2 | 36.4 | 19.8 | 13.8 | 3.6 | 12.1 |
| 3. | Students choose research activities or topics that interest them | - | 3.6 | 38.5 | 41.7 | 4.9 | 11.3 |
| 4. | Students participate in field trips, e.g., museums, libraries, businesses | - | .8 | 1.6 | 48.2 | 37.7 | 11.7 |
| 5. | Teachers use audio visual resources in class (e.g., films, filmstrips,T.V.) | - | 23.1 | 41.3 | 21.9 | 2.8 | 10.9 |
| 6. | Newspapers, magazines are used in classroom | 4.5 | 16.2 | 25.5 | 36.0 | 6.5 | 11.3 |
| 7. | Students use primary source materials, e.g., diaries, letters, photos, artifacts | - | 1.2 | 14.2 | 42.5 | 30.8 | 11.3 |
| 8. | Outside speakers visit the classroom | .4 | .4 | 1.6 | 33.2 | 53.8 | 10.5 |
| 9. | Simulations, games, role playing are used in the classroom | .4 | 2.0 | 13.8 | 44.9 | 26.7 | 12.1 |
| 10. | Students work on: | | | | | | |
| | i) individual projects | 5.3 | 12.1 | 33.6 | 35.2 | 2.0 | 11.7 |
| | ii) group projects | .8 | 7.3 | 32.0 | 39.3 | 6.1 | 14.6 |

These responses suggest that in most grade 8 Social Studies classrooms, there is a balance of teacher and student activities. Fifty-nine point one percent (59.1%) of teachers report that they present information to listening students at least weekly. On the other hand, students express or defend their opinions on at least a weekly basis in 50.6% of the province's classrooms. They also work on individual projects on at least a monthly basis in 51.0% of classrooms, and on group projects in 40.1% of classrooms.

However, one should not ignore the converse of these figures, which seem to indicate that in roughly half of the grade 8 Social Studies classrooms there is little scope for student involvement or activity. If 50.6% of students present or defend opinions at least weekly, then presumably another 49.4% get to do this more infrequently. In fact, the responses indicate that it happens monthly in 19.8% of cases, a few times a year in 13.8% of cases, and never in 3.6%.

These figures are higher than the Technical Advisory Committee expected to find and indicate that many classrooms provide little opportunity for active student involvement. In these classrooms, students, it seems, mostly listen, take notes, and do projects. This is to miss the rich potential of good Social Studies teaching, which provides many opportunities for the exploration of controversial issues, both past and present, and for the development and application of skills. It encourages students to voice their opinions, test their ideas in the clash of argument and debate, and generally develop awareness that education is important, relevant, and interesting. The grade 8 Social Studies program lends itself to this kind of teaching which is also consistent with the overall goals of the Social Studies K-12 curriculum as a whole.

Further evidence that some grade 8 classrooms are not the centres of active learning that they could be is provided by the data concerning field trips, speakers, simulation and role playing, and the use of primary sources. The last two strategies are especially applicable to the grade 8 Social Studies program, with its strongly historical emphasis. It is a little surprising, for example, to see that in such a program, 30.8% of classrooms never use primary sources and 42.5% do so only a few times a year. Only 15.4% of teachers report using primary sources at least monthly, even though this approach has been recommended as a basic tool of History teaching since at least the turn of the century (Keatinge, 1927).

There are, of course, obvious problems of access and availability concerning such materials. Some would argue that they are not necessarily appropriate at the grade 8 level, though the research refutes this argument (Booth,1987; Osborne, 1975). It must also be recognized that field trips and visiting speakers are not as applicable in the grade 8 program as in others - though there is most definitely a place for them - and that they can be disruptive of school routines. Nonetheless, even recognizing such difficulties, there is a strong case for the use of more active methods of teaching and learning at the grade 8 level. Such methods are worthwhile in themselves and also consistent with the philosophy and approach of the Social Studies curriculum as a whole and with the Middle Years philosophy of which grade 8 is a part.

It is tempting to speculate as to whether the picture that emerges of grade 8 Social Studies classrooms, which shows that about half of them do not realize the full potential of their subject, has something to do with the fact that roughly half of the grade 8 Social Studies teachers report themselves as having had only a few Social Studies courses in their own academic and professional training. It seems reasonable to suppose that teachers who are not thoroughly at home in their subject would be tempted to stick closely to the textbook, because of their unfamiliarity with alternative and more exciting approaches.

## EVALUATION

As part of the survey, teachers were also asked to report on how they evaluated their students in the grade 8 Social Studies course. Insofar as the various objectives of the course were concerned, teachers reported as follows:

In formally evaluating student growth, what emphasis do you place on the following types of objectives:

| | Great Emphasis | Some Emphasis | No Emphasis | No Response |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Knowledge Objectives | 45.7% | 44.5% | - | 9.7% |
| 2. Thinking and Research Skills Objectives | 57.9 | 32.8 | - | 9.3 |
| 3. Attitudes and Values Objectives | 28.3 | 57.5 | 4.5 | 9.7 |
| 4. Social Participation Objectives | 19.0 | 61.1 | 9.3 | 10.5 |

It is obvious that knowledge and skills objectives receive by far the heaviest emphasis, with attitudes and values and social participation objectives receiving somewhat less. Indeed, so far as receiving "great emphasis" goes, they receive considerably less. The ranking of the social participation objectives is of some interest, in view of the comments made in a previous section concerning rationales for teaching Social Studies. On balance, however, although more emphasis needs to be given to attitudes and values and social participation objectives, these data represent an acceptable state of affairs. It is especially encouraging to see the skill objectives receiving appropriate recognition.

Teachers were also asked to report on the priority they assigned to different forms of student evaluation, as shown in the following data:

B. How important are the following for student evaluation in your Social Studies class?

| | For Instructional Planning Purposes | | | | | For Grading Purposes | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Very Important | Important | Not Important | N/A | No Response | Very Important | Important | Not Important | N/A | No Response |
| 1. Samples of individual student work | 29.6% | 49.4% | 5.7% | 1.6% | 13.8% | 46.6% | 38.1% | 3.2% | 0.4% | 11.7% |
| 2. Samples of group projects | 14.2 | 57.9 | 6.5 | 5.7 | 15.8 | 27.5 | 48.2 | 6.9 | 4.9 | 12.6 |
| 3. Performance in day-to-day lessons | 32.8 | 47.8 | 4.5 | .4 | 14.6 | 34.0 | 48.2 | 5.7 | 0.8 | 11.3 |
| 4. Oral presentations | 6.9 | 53.0 | 17.4 | 6.9 | 15.8 | 11.3 | 47.8 | 19.8 | 6.5 | 14.6 |
| 5. Class tests: short answer | 23.5 | 52.6 | 6.9 | 1.6 | 15.4 | 34.4 | 48.2 | 4.9 | .4 | 12.1 |
| 6. Class tests: paragraph essays | 19.4 | 55.5 | 8.1 | 2.4 | 14.6 | 32.0 | 48.6 | 5.7 | 1.2 | 12.6 |
| 7. Teacher-made final cumulative exam | 12.6 | 39.3 | 15.0 | 17.8 | 15.4 | 19.0 | 40.5 | 11.7 | 15.8 | 13.0 |
| 8. School-wide cumulative exam | 2.4 | 15.4 | 20.6 | 43.7 | 17.8 | 6.1 | 15.4 | 19.4 | 43.3 | 15.8 |
| 9. Division/ district-wide cumulative exams | 2.0 | 6.5 | 23.1 | 51.8 | 16.6 | 2.8 | 6.5 | 21.9 | 54.3 | 14.6 |
| 10. Self-evaluation by students | 3.6 | 35.2 | 25.5 | 20.6 | 15.0 | 2.4 | 28.3 | 31.2 | 22.7 | 15.4 |
| 11. Role playing, simulation, debates | 3.6 | 35.6 | 28.3 | 14.6 | 17.8 | 2.4 | 36.0 | 28.7 | 17.0 | 15.8 |
| 12. Curriculum Assessment Support for Teachers | 7.3 | 27.5 | 17.0 | 30.0 | 18.2 | 5.7 | 23.1 | 19.4 | 35.2 | 16.6 |

These responses indicate that teachers are using a reasonable balance of evaluation procedures, with the major emphasis being placed upon students' work, both individually and through group projects, upon performance in daily lessons, and upon classroom tests. Only a small number of schools have school-wide or division-wide examinations, so that the main responsibility for evaluation rests with the classroom teacher. Just under 30% of teachers rate the Curriculum Assessment Support Materials for Social Studies as either important or very important. The Technical Advisory Committee felt that this figure was disappointingly low given the acknowledged value of these materials. Such alternative procedures for evaluation as oral reports, role-playing, debates, and self-evaluation are used somewhat less than more established methods. Overall, however, the data indicate that evaluation in Social Studies is proceeding satisfactorily, though it should be remembered that the survey provides no data on the quality of the evaluation instruments used by teachers.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Teachers were asked to report how many Social Studies inservices they had attended in the last two years. Twenty point six percent (20.6%) said they had attended three or more, but 70.8% reported that they had attended two or fewer. The specific figures were: 2 inservices - 25.1%; 1 inservice - 25.5%; 0 inservices - 20.2%. These figures are remarkably low, especially when set against the realization that roughly one-half of the teachers of grade 8 Social Studies have very little relevant academic or professional background. The very teachers who might benefit from suitable inservice programs apparently do not find them available, or, if they are available, do not make use of them. Given that 51.0% of teachers (see the items below) describe the Teachers' Society, the Social Science Teachers Association and the SAG conference as important or very important, one can conclude only that more teachers are prepared to turn to inservice training than there are those who actually use it. Presumably, Social Studies inservice sessions are simply not available and Social Studies is not seen by administrators as a high priority for inservice at this level. That many teachers do in fact recognize the need for inservice activities is further suggested by the fact that a substantial number of them wrote additional suggestions on the survey concerning this topic. For example, there were 81 written responses urging the importance of sharing and exchanging resources, units, materials, and so on. Similarly, 70 written responses called for more attention to issues of classroom teaching, for example, the integration of language and thinking skills, the use of computers, co-operative teaching strategies, and so on.

Teachers were also asked who or what they found most useful as a source of ideas and advice. Their responses were as follows:

How important are each of the following as sources of ideas and information for your teaching of Social Studies?

| | Very Important | Important | Not Important | Not Applicable | No Response |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Colleagues? | 27.5% | 42.9% | 16.6% | 5.3% | 7.7% |
| 2. Department Heads? | 4.9 | 14.2 | 21.1 | 50.6 | 9.3 |
| 3. School Administration? | .8 | 26.3 | 47.0 | 17.0 | 8.9 |
| 4. Superintendent? | .4 | 15.0 | 49.0 | 25.1 | 10.5 |
| 5. School Division Consultants? | 2.8 | 22.7 | 30.8 | 36.0 | 7.7 |
| 6. M.T.S. (MSSTA,SAG)? | 5.7 | 45.3 | 28.7 | 13.0 | 7.3 |
| 7. Department of Education | | | | | |
| a) Consultants? | 4.5 | 32.8 | 36.0 | 17.8 | 8.9 |
| b) Small Schools Conference? | 10.1 | 29.6 | 23.9 | 27.9 | 8.5 |
| 8. Faculty of Education | | | | | |
| a) Courses? | 3.2 | 31.6 | 34.0 | 18.6 | 12.6 |
| b) Inservice? | 7.3 | 42.1 | 25.9 | 15.8 | 8.9 |
| 9. Methodology Texts? | 6.1 | 35.6 | 36.0 | 10.9 | 11.3 |
| 10. History and Social Science Teacher (journal) | 1.6 | 21.9 | 32.4 | 32.8 | 11.3 |
| 11. Manitoba Social Science Teachers Assoc. Journal? | .8 | 21.9 | 35.6 | 30.0 | 11.7 |

In grade 8, as indeed in other grades, teachers obviously find their colleagues to be their most important source of assistance. No other group approaches this position, though 51.0% of teachers report that they find the Teachers' Society useful, presumably through the work of the Social Science Teachers Association and the SAG conference. Forty-nine point four percent (49.4%) of teachers also describe inservice as important or very important, though this finding should be read in the light of the infrequency of inservice in the Social Studies, as described above. Manitoba Education and Training and the Faculties of Education are rated as important or very important by approximately one-third of teachers, and just over a fifth assign a similar rating to professional journals. Perhaps the most notable feature of the data reported above is the large proportion of teachers who find most of the sources listed to be either not important or not applicable. The overall impression that emerges is that for most grade 8 Social Studies teachers, professional development is an individual business.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on the results of the grade 8 teacher survey.

1. **School administrators and teachers must be encouraged to devote the stipulated time allotment (35 minutes per day) to the grade 8 Social Studies program.**

2. **School administrators, when assigning teachers to teach Social Studies, should ensure that appropriate professional development and training is provided.**

3. **Teachers of Social Studies should ensure that appropriate professional development and training is available and utilized.**

4. **School administrators, teachers, and professional development personnel should ensure that Social Studies is given increased emphasis in inservice activity.**

5. **Manitoba Education and Training and the teacher education institutions, should make teachers more aware of, and encourage them to make greater use of the Social Studies resources available through Manitoba Education and Training.**

6. **Manitoba Education and Training and the teacher education institutions should encourage teachers to make greater use of primary sources in their teaching of the grade 8 program.**

7. **Manitoba Education and Training, and the appropriate professional bodies, together with the universities, should continue and expand their efforts to develop prototype materials that demonstrate how student-centred activity methods can be used in the grade 8 program.**

8. **The appropriate organizations involved in Social Studies education should be encouraged to work together in establishing a clearing house and resource collection for the use of Manitoba Social Studies teachers.**

9. **Manitoba Education and Training and teacher training institutions should encourage teachers to place more emphasis upon student activities related to the social participation objectives of the grade 8 program.**

10. **Manitoba Education and Training and teacher training institutions should encourage teachers to use the Curriculum Assessment Support materials available from the Manitoba Textbook Bureau.**

# CHAPTER 9

# Grade Ten Written Test

A total of 799 students formed the sample for the grade 10 Assessment.

The grade 10 Assessment consisted of 122 questions divided into four parts, matching the four categories of objectives in the provincial Social Studies curriculum: knowledge of facts and generalizations; thinking and research skills; attitudes and values; and social participation. Each of the four parts of the test was further divided into subtests. The parts of the test dealing with social participation and attitudes and values obviously have no right or wrong answers. They are intended to provide some indications of what students think and feel on issues related to the curriculum and to help determine the extent to which the curriculum is meeting its goals in these particular areas of objectives. In contrast, the parts of the test dealing with thinking and research skills (including mapwork) and knowledge of facts and generalizations do have correct or best answers. The test also included an essay item (item #122), since the ability to write clearly and correctly is obviously an important part of any social studies curriculum. The distribution of test items among the various topics and subtopics of the curriculum was as outlined in Table 9.1.

## Table 9.1

Grade 10 Geography Assessment 1989
Categorization of Items by Subtest

Item Number

| | Cognitive | | | Affective | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Content Area | Knowledge | Thinking and Research Skills | Mapwork | Social Participation | Attitudes and Values |
| I. OVERVIEW OF NORTH AMERICA | | | | | |
| I.1 Defining North America | 2 | 38 | 71 | | 103,104 |
| I.2 The Physical Environment | 3,4 | 39,41,42 | 78 | | |
| I.3 The Population Distribution | | 43 | | | 105,106 |
| I.4 Concept of a Region | 5 | 40 | | | |
| II. THE AGRICULTURAL INTERIOR | | | | | |
| II.1 Defining the Region | 7,10,12 | 44 | 72,79 | | |
| II.2 The Soil Resource Base | 11 | 46 | 80 | | |
| II.3 Agricultural Activities | 8 | 45 | 75 | | |
| II.4 Other Economic Activities | | | | | |
| II.5 Current Issues | | | | | 107 |
| III. THE NORTH | | | | | |
| III.1 Defining the North | 13 | 53 | | | |
| III.2 Resource Base | 14,15,16 | 47,48,51,54 | | | 108 |
| III.3 The Peoples of the North | 17 | 49,50,52 | | | 109 |
| III.4 Current Issues | | | | | 110 |
| IV. WESTERN CORDILLERA | | | | | |
| IV.1 Defining the Region | | | 73 | | |
| IV.2 Evolution of Mountains | 20 | | | | |
| IV.3 The Resource Base | 18,19 | 55,56,57,58 | 74 | | |
| IV.4 Other Economic Activities | 21,22 | | | | |
| IV.5 Current Issues | | | | | 111,112 |
| V. ATLANTIC CANADA AND APPALACHIA | | | | | |
| V.1 Defining the Region | 24 | 60,61 | 77 | | |
| V.2 Regional Economic Differences | | | | | 113 |
| V.3 Fishing | 23,25 | 59,62 | | | |
| V.4 Current Issues | 26,27 | | | | 114 |
| VI. THE INDUSTRIAL HEARTLAND | | | | | |
| VI.1 Defining the Region | 6,28,29,31 | 64 | | | |
| VI.2 Industrialization | 32,30 | 63,67 | | | |
| VI.3 Urbanization | 9 | 65 | 76 | | 115 |
| VI.4 Current Issues | | 66 | | | |
| VIII. CANADIAN, CONTINENTAL, WORLD ISSUES | | | | | |
| VIII.1 Central America | 33,34,35 | | | | |
| VIII.2 Energy | | 68 | | | |
| VIII.3 Other Issues | 36,37 | 69,70 | | | 116-119,120 |
| IX. GENERAL | | | 81,101 | 121<br>101 | |

**NOTE**: The grouping of items presented above corrects the grouping on pages 13 and 14 in the Grade 10 Manual and Scoring Key and is as appears on the published errata sheet accompanying said document.

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## KNOWLEDGE OF FACTS AND GENERALIZATIONS

Knowledge of facts and generalizations represents one of the key points of the Social Studies curriculum and obviously plays a major part in the development of skills and the formation of attitudes and values. The grade 10 Assessment contained 36 items dealing directly with students' knowledge. It should be remembered also that many of the items in other sections of the Assessment also called for the application of geographical knowledge. The 36 items that tested students' knowledge most directly were divided among the topics of the grade 10 Geography as shown in Table 9.1. Table 9.2 below indicates how students responded.

Table 9.2

**Response Rate by Content Area on**
**Knowledge of Facts and Generalizations Subtest**

| Content Area | I Overview of North America | II Agricultural Interior | III The North | IV Western Cordillera | V Atlantic Canada and Appalachia | VI Industrial Heartland | VIII Canadian,Continental and World Issues |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| # of items: | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 7 | 5 |
| | #2-80% | # 7-50% | #13-53% | #18-69% | #23-74% | # 6-76 | #33-87% |
| | #3-44 | # 8-32 | #14-39 | #19-32 | #24-52 | # 9-46 | #34-49 |
| | #4-30 | #10-65 | #15-72 | #20-78 | #25-82 | #28-54 | #35-62 |
| | #5-65 | #11-46 | #16-56 | #21-35 | #26-77 | #29-69 | #36-83 |
| | | #12-36 | #17-61 | #22-30 | #27-41 | #30-55 | #37-64 |
| | | | | | | #31-82 | |
| | | | | | | #32-69 | |
| Subtest Means | 54.88 | 46.26 | 56.70 | 49.26 | 65.58 | 64.94 | 69.36 |

Overall mean response rate 58.61

Table 9.3 presents the same data in another form to demonstrate the range of correct responses.

Table 9.3

**Response Rates per Item by Range of Correct Responses on**
**Knowledge of Facts and Generalizations Subtest**

| | Range of Correct Responses | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Item No. 0-29% | Item No. 30-39% | Item No. 40-49% | Item No. 50-59% | Item No. 60-69% | Item No. 70-79% | Item No. 80-100% |
| Percentage of Students Responding Correctly to Each Item | | 4. 30%<br>8. 32<br>12. 36<br>14. 39<br>19. 32<br>21. 35<br>22. 30 | 3. 44%<br>9. 46<br>11. 46<br>27. 41<br>34. 49 | 7. 50%<br>13. 53<br>16. 56<br>24. 52<br>28. 54<br>30. 55 | 5. 65%<br>10. 65<br>17. 61<br>18. 69<br>29. 69<br>32. 69<br>35. 62<br>37. 64 | 6. 76%<br>15. 72<br>20. 78<br>23. 74<br>26. 77 | 2. 80%<br>25. 82<br>31. 82<br>33. 87<br>36. 83 |
| No. of Items | 0 | 7 | 5 | 6 | 8 | 5 | 5 |

One should be careful not to make too much of the evidence since it rests upon only a small base of data, but it is roughly consistent with the results reported in the section of this chapter dealing with skills. About 60% of students perform reasonably well, with about one-third of students falling below expected levels.

## OVERVIEW OF CANADA

Knowledge of this section of the grade 10 Geography program was tested by four items (2-5), with an average correct response rate of 54.88%. Item 2 gave students the least difficulty, with 80% knowing that the 49th parallel marks part of the border between the U.S.A. and Canada. Students had the most difficulty with item 4, which only 30.2% answered correctly:

*4. Which of the following contains only items made from renewable resources?*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *30.2%* | *A)** | *Telephone book, orange juice* |
| *3.6* | *B)* | *Asbestos insulation, instant coffee* |
| *62.6* | *C)* | *Plastic raincoat, soft drink can* |
| *3.4* | *D)* | *Raisin bread, steel girder* |

It is worth noting that 62.6% of students who answered this item incorrectly chose response C, thus indicating some misunderstanding of the item. It was the opinion of the Technical Advisory Committee that many students confused the term, "renewable" with "recyclable".

Whatever the reason, there is clearly a process of reasoning going on here which led many students to misunderstand the item. The response indicates not so much a clear-cut wrong answer as an attempt to think through the item. One can see this process in action in other items in this section also. For example, in item 5, although 65.2% correctly answered that the term "region" is generally used in geography to describe an area having "enough similarities to be considered as one unit", another 20.2% of students chose the answer that described it as being "one central governing body". Although, technically speaking, this answer is incorrect, since the item specified a definition such as used "generally" and "in geography", it nonetheless indicates not a pattern of random guessing, or an answer which is irrevocably wrong, but a situation in which students attempt to think their way through an item and arrive at an answer which, though incorrect, is intelligible and even in a sense plausible.

After item 4, in this overview section, item 3 created the most difficulty, being answered correctly by 44.2% of students, although, interestingly, another 31.8% chose the same wrong answer, thus suggesting again that more than random guessing was involved:

***3.*** ***The pattern of Canada's vegetation zones is most closely related to its***

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *44.2%* | *A)** | ***climate zones.*** |
| *31.8* | *B)* | ***soil types.*** |
| *4.4* | *C)* | ***longitudinal position.*** |
| *19.4* | *D)* | ***landform regions.*** |

Perhaps the key words in this item are "most closely related" and it might have helped make the intent of the item clearer if they had been underlined. Many students apparently failed to see the significance of these words, and rushed to response B, without weighing it against the other possible responses. As suggested elsewhere in this chapter, this pattern can be seen in other items also, and indicates students' relative lack of test skills and their reluctance to suspend judgment and weigh evidence before reaching closure. The Technical Advisory Committee decided that students performed as well as expected in this content area.

## THE AGRICULTURAL INTERIOR

This unit of the grade 10 Geography program was tested by five items (7-8, 10-12) with 46.26% being the mean of correct responses. Two items were answered correctly by more than 50% of students:

***10.*** ***The Agricultural Interior region of North America is a particularly good area for growing wheat because***

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *27.2%* | *A)* | ***the winters are mild and the summers are warm.*** |
| *4.8* | *B)* | ***the rainfall is heavy throughout the year.*** |
| *3.0* | *C)* | ***there are large cities and dense population to provide good markets.*** |
| *65.0* | *D)** | ***there are large areas of suitable land available for cultivation.*** |

Once again, an incorrect response (A) attracted a notable concentration of students. This becomes to a certain extent intelligible, however, when one femembers that the Agricultural Interior of North America runs down through the U.S. mid-west and into Texas. If a student was thinking of, say, Texas or Kansas, then response A becomes plausible. Indeed, one could argue that, taken as a whole, the Agricultural Interior has mild winters, certainly when compared to the Canadian Prairies, which represent only the northern fringe of the region. The Technical Advisory Committee, in evaluating this item and its answers, concluded that the item had to a certain extent misled students. Here, as in some other parts of the test, the raw figures of right and wrong answers should not be taken purely at face value.

Item 8 caused the most difficulty, with only 32.7% of students answering correctly. It appears that the term "localization" caused genuine difficulty for many students, since their answers were distributed across most of the possible responses:

*8. Which term best describes the distribution of farms such as tobacco farms, market gardening and fruit farms in Southern Ontario?*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *32.7%* | *A)** | *Localization* |
| *23.8* | *B)* | *Industrialization* |
| *32.2* | *C)* | *Regionalization* |
| *10.5* | *D)* | *Generalization* |

Even here, however, it could be that students understand the concept, even if they select the wrong nomenclature. It is notable that relatively few students opted for response D, which is obviously irrelevant, while the great majority selected a response that was at least plausible. Rather than using a strictly geographic definition, such as is found in the textbook and the curriculum guide, students chose a more everyday term.

Item 12 revealed a somewhat similar scattering of responses, suggesting that either students simply did not know the appropriate information or that they were confused by the terminology:

*12. The geological base of the Agricultural Interior is an important resource of*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *18.8%* | *A)* | *metallic and non-metallic minerals.* |
| *36.8* | *B)** | *fossil fuels and non-metallic minerals.* |
| *27.8* | *C)* | *fossil fuels and metallic minerals.* |
| *16.4* | *D)* | *mineral fuels and metallic minerals.* |

Overall, in this section, students appear to have had some difficulty with technical terms. The example of "localization" has already been discussed. Another example is provided by item 7, which revealed some confusion about terminal moraines:

7. *The disappearance of the ancient glacial lakes left level, fertile clay deposits known as*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *30.3%* | *A)* | *terminal moraines.* |
| *11.9* | *B)* | *small drumlins.* |
| *5.9* | *C)* | *winding eskers.* |
| *50.7* | *D)** | *lacustrine plains.* |

It might also be that item 12, shown above, reveals some problems with definitions and terminology. The Technical Advisory Committee felt that on this section of the Assessment students performed below expectations.

## THE NORTH

This unit of the grade 10 Geography program comprised five items (13-17), with an average correct response rate of 56.7%. There was only one item which fell below 50%, viz. item 14:

14. *Which type of natural vegetation would supply most of the raw materials for pulp and paper mills?*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *2.9%* | *A)* | *Parkland vegetation* |
| *34.5* | *B)* | *Mixed forest* |
| *39.2* | *C)** | *Coniferous forest* |
| *22.7* | *D)* | *Deciduous forest* |

It was the view of the Technical Advisory Committee that, though difficult, this was a fair item. It obviously challenged the students.

The item which caused students the least difficulty was item 15 dealing with the definition of the tree-line and which was answered correctly by 72.5% of students. The remaining items in this section were answered correctly by just over half of the students: item 13 - 53%; item 16 - 56%; item 17 - 61%. Sixty-one point seven percent (61.7%) of students successfully identified Minamata disease with mercury pollution in the pulp and paper industry (item 17), but a relatively high proportion of students had difficulty with describing the composition of the Canadian Shield, as is suggested by the following two items:

13. *The Canadian Shield is composed primarily of*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *53.8%* | *A)** | *igneous and metamorphic rock.* |
| *31.7* | *B)* | *horizontal layers of sedimentary rock.* |
| *2.6* | *C)* | *volcanic rock.* |
| *11.3* | *D)* | *folded and faulted rocks of all types.* |

16. *Which resources are most commonly associated with the Canadian Shield area?*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *10.9%* | *A)* | *Petroleum, fertile soil* |
| *56.3* | *B)** | *Metallic minerals, forests* |
| *14.8* | *C)* | *Fertile soils, metallic minerals* |
| *16.8* | *D)* | *Forests, petroleum* |

It is a matter of some surprise that 31.7% of students think that the Canadian Shield is composed of sedimentary rock and that only 56.3% of students were able to identify correctly the major resources of the Shield. In both cases, the Technical Advisory Committee felt that the items were clear and straightforward and expected that students would have done better than they did.

## THE WESTERN CORDILLERA

There were five items on the Assessment (items 18-22) which dealt with students' knowledge of this unit of the grade 10 Geography program. The mean correct response rate was 49.26%, ranging from a high of 78% (item 20) to a low of 30% (item 22). Of the five items, three were answered correctly by approximately 30% of students. Surprisingly, in view of difficulties with terminology elsewhere on the Assessment, most students had no problems with the item dealing with plate tectonics:

20. *The explanation for the shifting continents and mountain building processes on the earth's surface is called*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *9.5%* | *A)* | *weathering.* |
| *6.1* | *B)* | *deposition.* |
| *5.1* | *C)* | *sedimentation.* |
| *73.8* | *D)** | *plate tectonics.* |

An approximately similar proportion of students correctly answered item 18, with 69% of students identifying salmon as the most valuable catch off Canada's West Coast.

In contrast, only 32.8% correctly associated coal with Robert's Bank (item 19), with a higher proportion (37.4%) misidentifying petroleum as the export in this item. Two other items that were answered less well than expected were items 21 and 22:

21. *The orchards in the Okanagan Valley are located mainly on benchlands (terraces or valley sides) because of*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *35.4%* | *A)** | *frosts.* |
| *42.3* | *B)* | *winds.* |
| *6.0* | *C)* | *insects.* |
| *15.6* | *D)* | *harvesting.* |

22. *Where are most of the lumber mills of the Western Cordillera located?*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *13.8%* | *A)* | *Windward slopes of the interior plateau* |
| *20.7* | *B)* | *Leeward slopes of the interior plateau* |
| *34.0* | *C)* | *Leeward slopes of the coastal mountains* |
| *30.8* | *D)** | *Windward slopes of the coastal mountains* |

Item 21 provides another example of students answering not so much wrongly as with an interpretation different from that anticipated by the item. Although the correct response was A (frosts), one can argue that B (winds) is also a plausible answer. Since cold air sinks and thus, in a sense, can be said to give rise to winds, response B is in its way defensible. Certainly, the fact that so many students chose it suggests that more than haphazard guessing was involved. Here, as elsewhere, we must be careful not to interpret a "wrong" answer too simply. The Technical Advisory Committee decided that this item had caused some unnecessary difficulty for students. If one takes this into account, then, in the Committee's opinion, students had performed more or less as expected in this section of the Assessment.

## ATLANTIC CANADA AND THE APPALACHIANS

There were five items (23-27) devoted to this unit of the grade 10 Geography program, with an mean correct response of 65.58%. Only item 27 was answered correctly by fewer than half of the students which received only 41% correct responses:

27. *The most important coal fields of North America are found in the*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *41.1%* | *A)** | *Appalachians.* |
| *14.4* | *B)* | *Hudson Bay Lowlands.* |
| *20.0* | *C)* | *Great Plains.* |
| *23.8* | *D)* | *Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Lowlands* |

The item appears to be unambiguous and it seems clear that many students simply did not know the information needed to answer it. Item 24 similarly called for some specific information, in this case dealing with the Bay of Fundy in comparison to other tidal waters, and it was answered correctly by 52.1% of students.

The other items in this section, however, were answered correctly by over 70% of students, making this one of the best answered sections of the Assessment. The item that was answered the most successfully was item 25:

*25. The major dispute between Newfoundland and St Pierre-Miquelon has been over*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *5.9%* | *A)* | *seal hunting.* |
| *4.9* | *B)* | *factory ships.* |
| *6.4* | *C)* | *methods of fishing.* |
| *82.4* | *D)** | *fishing areas.* |

The response to item 23 also suggests that students have a basic knowledge of east coast fishing issues and that this aspect of the grade 10 program is well covered in the classrooms:

*23. The area known as the Grand Banks is*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *74.6%* | *A)** | *a fishing ground off the coast of Newfoundland.* |
| *8.5* | *B)* | *a range of hills in central New Brunswick.* |
| *2.8* | *C)* | *the major commercial zone in downtown Montreal.* |
| *13.5* | *D)* | *a tourist region in the foothills of the Rocky mountains.* |

The Technical Advisory Committee felt that students performed above expectations on this section of the Assessment.

## THE INDUSTRIAL HEARTLAND

This unit of the grade 10 Geography program was assessed by seven items (6,9,28-32), with a mean correct response rate of 64.9%. Only one item (9) was answered correctly by fewer than 50% of students:

*9. Land values in the Niagara Fruit Belt have been most influenced by*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *16.8%* | *A)* | *nearness to Lake Ontario.* |
| *46.6* | *B)** | *urban sprawl.* |
| *22.8* | *C)* | *world trade markets.* |
| *13.1* | *D)* | *higher priced fruit.* |

The distribution of incorrect responses to this item suggests that students had no difficulty with its intent or wording, but rather that they did not know the necessary information.

Just over half (54.6%) of students knew that the water from Lake Erie flows into Lake Ontario. The distribution of the incorrect responses suggests that many students do not know the relative location of the Great Lakes:

28. *The water of Lake Erie flows into*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *12.8%* | *A)* | *Lake Michigan.* |
| *13.9* | *B)* | *Lake Superior.* |
| *54.6* | *C)** | *Lake Ontario.* |
| *18.5* | *D)* | *Lake Huron.* |

Surprisingly, only fifty-five point seven percent (55.7%) of students correctly understood the term "primary industry", with 18.0% misidentifying tourism, and another 18.8% manufacturing, as examples of primary industry (item 30).

The remaining items in this section of the Assessment were answered better. Interestingly, the item which caused the least difficulty was one which might have been expected to have caused some problems, since it involved the weighing of a number of factors:

31. *Which is an example of the influence of the Great Lakes on the climate of Southern Ontario?*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *6.0%* | *A)* | *They make the region warmer in summer* |
| *5.4* | *B)* | *They make the region colder in winter* |
| *82.5* | *C)** | *They make the region more moderate all year* |
| *5.9* | *D)* | *They decrease the amount of precipitation in the region* |

Just over three-quarters of the students correctly identified the basic concept of industrial heartland:

6. *The industrial heartland of a country can be described most accurately as the area or region*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *7.6%* | *A)* | *which has the greatest number of farming or lumbering activities.* |
| *5.1* | *B)* | *in which there is a large concentration of transportation routes.* |
| *9.9* | *C)* | *in which a country's financial institutions are concentrated.* |
| *76.2* | *D)** | *which has the greatest concentration of manufacturing activity.* |

Item 32 also provided some evidence on this point, suggesting that students for the most part understood what was involved:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | *32* | *Which one of the following would be most useful in identifying a manufacturing region?* |
| *69.8%* | *A)** | *Statistics on the percentage of the work force employed in industry* |
| *3.8* | *B)* | *Statistics on the birth rate and the death rate* |
| *11.9* | *C)* | *Statistics on the net rural urban migration* |
| *13.9* | *D)* | *Statistics on the availability of hydro electricity* |

The Technical Advisory Committee felt that students performed up to expectations on this section of the Assessment.

## CENTRAL AMERICAN AND CANADIAN, CONTINENTAL, AND WORLD ISSUES

This is the final unit of the grade 10 Geography program and five items (33-37) on the Assessment were devoted to it. It obtained the highest overall mean of correct responses of any section on the Assessment, with a mean of 69.4%.

Not surprisingly, perhaps, the item that was answered the most successfully was item 33, dealing with music, with 87.4% of students correctly identifying calypso with the Caribbean. Eighty-three point two percent (83.2%) of students also correctly identified the United States as Canada's largest trading partner (item 36). Sixty-two point five percent (62.5%) of students identified sugar cane as an important export crop in the Caribbean, but another 23.0% identified citrus fruit, which, though technically incorrect, nonetheless has a certain plausibility. The Technical Advisory Committee decided that there was a certain ambiguity in this item. The item that caused the most difficulty was item 34, with only 49.3% of students correctly identifying bauxite as Jamaica's chief mineral export. Although the items in this section had been made a little easier than in others, since it was anticipated that not all students would have reached this part of the grade 10 program by the June 5, 1989 testing date, the Technical Advisory Committee felt that students had performed above expectations.

## THINKING AND RESEARCH SKILLS OBJECTIVES

The Social Studies Curriculum Guide (1985) describes the Thinking and Research Skill objectives of the curriculum as follows:

> "The thinking and research skill objectives are to assist students in developing such critical thinking and research skills as:
>
> - locating, organizing, and evaluating information;
> - acquiring information through reading, listening, and observing;
> - communicating in oral and written form;
> - interpreting pictures, charts, graphs, tables, maps and globes;
> - understanding time and chronology.
>
> The thinking and research skill objectives make it possible for students to be actively involved in gathering and interpreting Social Studies data, in drawing conclusions, and in critical thinking.
>
> Gathering Data - gathering data includes such activities as identifying, testing, acquiring, listening, looking, examining, observing, searching, interviewing, locating, itemizing, and recording.
>
> Interpreting Data - interpreting data includes such activities as comparing, describing, explaining, inferring, analyzing, evaluating, and distinguishing. It also includes the ability to interpret graphic and symbolic data, such as maps, graphs, tables, charts, timelines, and cartoons.
>
> Drawing Conclusions - drawing conclusions includes examining, discussing, debating, summarizing, postulating, synthesizing, classifying, creating, evaluating of evidence, and drawing of warranted conclusions.
>
> Critical Thinking - critical thinking skills include such activities as formulating, detecting, perceiving, hypothesizing, inferring, analyzing, evaluating, generalizing, conceptualizing, judging, recognizing underlying assumptions, identifying central issues" (p.10).

On the grade 10 Assessment there were 33 items (38-70) that were designed to test students' competence in these skills. The distribution of these items among the various units of the grade 10 course can be found in Table 9.1. However, since these skills are common across all units, it is more useful to report them, not by unit, but by the nature of the particular skills in the item. Essentially, the Assessment items that dealt with skills can be divided into the five categories shown below along with the items which test each objective:

1. map analysis and utilization: 9 items (38-41, 43-44, 53, 55, 64)
2. map locations: 10 items (71-80)
3. comprehension and analysis: 14 items (42, 49-52, 54, 57-61, 63, 66-67)
4. interpreting graphs, charts and tables: 10 items (44-48, 56, 62, 65, 68-70)
5. essay writing: 1 item (122).

## MAP ANALYSIS AND UTILIZATION

The items dealing with map analysis and utilization were intended to see not whether students could identify or locate particular places on a map, but rather to determine the extent to which they could interpret and analyze the kinds of information that might be found on a map, for example by comparing different types of information, by using symbols and by applying the symbols contained in a key or legend to the map itself. Of the nine items dealing with these and related skills, students were most successful with items 38 and 41. Item 38 required them to correctly identify Lake Michigan from a number of different lake-shapes and 76.1% of respondents did so successfully. Item 41 involved the use of a cross-section of the North American continent and 76.3% of students correctly identified the Appalachian region. Three further items were answered correctly by roughly two-thirds of the students. Item 43 required students to interpret a map showing population distribution and density and 66.3% did so correctly. Item 53 asked for a comparison between two regions and a correct answer assumed that students would know something about the regions beyond what was indicated on the map. Sixty-eight percent (68%) answered it correctly. Item 55 required students to use a map of California showing annual rainfall, to understand the legend and to apply it to the map. Sixty-five point seven percent (65.7%) did so correctly, though it is perhaps worth noting that 19.5% of students selected the answer that was diametrically opposed to the correct one. It seems unlikely that these students would make such an obvious mistake and that there is at least a suggestion here, which is reinforced by other data to be discussed below, that they simply did not read or follow the instructions to the item correctly, thus leading them to substitute the "most" for the "fewest".

Four other items were less well done: - viz. items 44, 64, 40, and 39.

Item 44 involved the use of a cross-section to identify the Manitoba Escarpment and was answered correctly by 54.7% of students. However, it should be noted that 28.5% of students all chose the same wrong answer and it could well be that this error arose, not from not knowing the Manitoba Escarpment, but rather from misjudging the distance on the cross-section between the marked locations of Ontario and British Columbia. Clearly, the fact that so many students (28.5%) would all select the same wrong answer suggests that more than random guess-work was involved. A similar result is found in item 64 which gave students a cross-section of the Great Lakes and asked them to calculate the differences in elevation between Lake Superior and Lake Ontario. Only 43.3% of students responded correctly, even though the necessary information was provided on the diagram that accompanied the item. However, another 32.9% of students all opted for the same wrong answer, which they reached by subtracting the depth of Lake Ontario from that of Lake Superior rather than calculating the difference in elevation. Here, as elsewhere, it was not that students did not know how to answer the item, but rather that they misread or misapplied the directions. Another factor may well have been at work here, in that the depths of the lakes stood out more clearly on the diagram than did the elevations, and this apparently distracted many students. This might well be an example of what psychologists in the Piagetian tradition sometimes describe as premature closure or centering, where students seize too quickly upon one element of a problem, often the most visible or the most tangible, and fail to measure it against other variables (Osborne, 1975).

Item 40 required students to compare geographic regions on a map of North America and determine which two shared the largest overlap. Puzzlingly, only 44.4% of students answered the item correctly. There was no overwhelmingly popular wrong answer, suggesting that students were genuinely stumped by this item. Answers to other items suggest that students have a reasonable knowledge of the geographic regions of North America so it is unlikely that this was the problem. One can assume only that many students simply did not understand the item and had difficulty with the idea of overlap which they appear to have either confused with the concept of transition, or understood to mean a common border.

Finally, the item dealing with Map Analysis and Utilization that was answered the least successfully was item 39, where only 28.7% of students correctly identified isohyets. This seems to be a clear case of students simply not knowing the term, either because they had forgotten it or never been taught it.

The overall distribution of responses to the nine items dealing with Map Analysis and Utilization shows 2 items with a 70% correct or better response, 3 items with a correct response rating of between 60-70%, 3 items with ratings between 40-50%, and one item with a 20-30% correct response rating. However, it must be remembered that two items (44 and 64) that received a low response could well be placed in a higher category, in that they indicate not that students do not possess the necessary skills, but rather that they misunderstood the items.

## MAP LOCATIONS

In a geography assessment it seems eminently reasonable to determine the extent to which students can identify or locate important points on a map, especially in the context of a particular program of study. Thus, items 71-80 asked students to identify places or regions marked on a map of North and Central America. The results are recorded in Table 9.4.

Table 9.4

**Percentage of Correct Responses to Map Location Items**

| Item Number | Location | % Correct Responses |
|---|---|---|
| 71 | Nicaragua | 35.0% |
| 72 | Oklahoma | 42.3 |
| 73 | Los Angeles | 54.6 |
| 74 | West Coast Marine Climate | 71.6 |
| 75 | Dairy Belt | 36.5 |
| 76 | Toronto | 54.2 |
| 77 | Appalachians | 71.0 |
| 78 | Labrador Current | 57.4 |
| 79 | Mississippi River | 53.9 |
| 80 | Black Chernozem Soil | 39.3 |

Examining these 10 responses by range of correct responses provides the following distribution:

70-79% correct responses - 2 items
60-69% " " - 0 items
50-59% " " - 4 items
40-49% " " - 1 item
30-39% " " - 3 items.

These results must be seen in context if they are not to be misunderstood. For example, although only 35% of students correctly identified Nicaragua, it seems that most of them knew it was in Central America. It is probable that many adults also could not precisely differentiate Nicaragua from, say, El Salvador or Honduras. Similarly, of those students who did not correctly identify Toronto, 16.1% chose Hamilton and, on the size of map used for the assessment, this was not an altogether unreasonable answer. Similarly, although only 36.5% correctly identified the dairy belt, another 28.8% thought the area marked was the corn belt and, given the size and type of map used, this was a reasonably plausible answer. Only 23.9% of students selected something obviously inapplicable, viz. 9.6% choosing the cotton belt and 14.3% spring wheat. It should also be noted that these items all attracted a no-response rate of between 9% and 11% of respondents. This proportion of students obviously did not have the time to complete this part of the test. Nonetheless, the percentage of correct responses has been calculated on a base which includes these no-response answers, thereby possibly depressing the final scores slightly.

Nevertheless, it seems clear that students' performance on these items did fall below expectations. This will be mentioned again in the section dealing with recommendations, but it seems clear that students should be made more familiar with the location of important places and regions. This should not be understood as a call for return to the static, rote teaching of capes and bays, but rather as a reminder that in their teaching of geographic concepts and processes, teachers should draw students' attention wherever possible to basic factual information.

## COMPREHENSION AND ANALYSIS

The fourteen items that dealt with this subtest of skills took different forms. Two items (items 49, 66) required students to understand the basic message of cartoons; one (item 52) called for the comprehension of a poem; four (items 50, 51, 59, 67) required the analysis of diagrams; four (items 57, 58, 60, 61) were based upon photographs; and three (items 42, 54, 63) involved the understanding of written statements. In all cases, the items required students to grasp the meaning of information, presented either pictorially or in written form.

Of these items, it was item 49, requiring the analysis of a political cartoon, that was answered most successfully, by 84.1% students. The other cartoon item (66) was answered correctly by 69.6% of students. In the case of this particular item, however, one of the "wrong" answers attracted a disproportionate number of responses (13.5%) and it might well be that some students read a little more into this item than was intended. The "correct" interpretation of the cartoon was that Japanese cars were hurting the U.S. economy, but one can see that some students would choose the response that said "they are better quality cars than American", in that one statement can be held to be prior to the other. Here, as elsewhere, one must be careful not to read too much too quickly into the information provided by multiple-choice items. If this interpretation of the response to item 66 is accepted, then it can be said that students at this level for the most part have no difficulty grasping the central message of a political cartoon.

The same would seem to be true of the students' ability to understand the basic theme of the poem presented in item 52. Although only 52.4% of the students indicated the correct response to this item, another 39.8% selected what was strictly speaking an incorrect response, but was nonetheless a plausible and defensible answer. Strictly speaking, the correct interpretation of the poem was that the environment should be left in its natural state, but given the poem's emphasis on the Cree people's native land, one can easily see why so many students would choose the response that said "land claims have to be settled".

Items 54 and 63 were also answered correctly by over 70% of students. Item 54 asked for the relationship between rocky woodland and a range of possible variables and 72.5% of students correctly identified thin soil. Similarly, 72.3% of students correctly identified the relationship between manufacturing and population distribution (item 63).

Items 42 and 51 were answered correctly by about two-thirds of the students. Item 42 asked which of a list of items would not be considered a resource by 18th century Plains Indians and 66% of students answered it correctly. Item 51 required the analysis and interpretation of a diagram depicting the production of newsprint and 65.1% of students answered it correctly.

A similar diagram, this time illustrating automobile production, was the basis of item 67, and this was answered correctly by only 53.3% of students. However, 26.4% of the remaining students all selected another response to the item, which though technically incorrect, was plausible. Rather than selecting the response that indicated only "manufactured products", these students selected "a combination of raw materials and manufactured products", and it is reasonable to assume that they reasoned that manufactured products are all based on raw materials and that therefore this was the desired response.

Similar difficulties arose with items 57 and 58 which involved the interpretation of photographs. In both cases, a "wrong" response attracted a disproportionate number of students: 27.8% in the case of item 57 and 32.5% in the case of item 58. In both cases, these responses, though technically "wrong", are defensible in view of the nature and quality of the photographs used on the test, and should therefore be added to the 54.7% and 39.3% of "correct" responses respectively.

There were, in addition, two other items based on photographs, items 60 and 61. Item 60 asked students to locate a picture of a typical east coast fishing village or outpost and 59.1% correctly selected the Appalachian region. Item 61 showed a coal mine at the water's edge and asked students to identify the economic activity shown at the coastal edge of Atlantic Canada. Thirty-six point nine percent (36.9%) of students correctly selected coal mining as the response, but another 46.2% identified fishing. It seems clear that in this case the point of the item was missed by students.

Even so, there is at least a suggestion in these two items, and it appears elsewhere in the grade 10 Assessment, that, when confronted with visual or pictorial evidence, students do not work with it as thoroughly as they could or should. Rather, they concentrate on the written words of the item and rely primarily on them and their general knowledge. This is, of course, consistent with what appears to happen in many classrooms at the high school level, and with the organization of Social Studies textbooks, where the visual material is treated as very much subordinate and ancillary to the written word. There is some reason for believing that students could and should be taught to make better use of non-verbal, pictorial material.

Finally, item 59, depicting various methods of fishing, was not answered as well as was expected, since only 41.6% of students correctly selected the correct illustration for purse-seine fishing. More, in fact, chose another response (43.6%), though, here again, it is possible that they might have understood the concept but chose the wrong illustration, since the most popular choice bore at least a superficial resemblance to the correct one. Alternatively, as in the case of isohyets discussed earlier, it is possible that this is something that students have either forgotten or not been taught.

The distribution of correct responses among the fourteen items dealing with comprehension and analysis skills was as follows:

80% or more correct responses - 1 item
70-79% correct responses - 3 items
60-69% correct responses - 2 items
50-59% correct responses - 5 items
40-49% correct responses - 1 item
30-39% correct responses - 2 items

However, it must be noted that if the interpretation of responses advanced here is correct, another five items (52, 57, 61, 67, 68) should be moved up into the 80% range. The most balanced conclusion to be drawn from this section is that approximately two-thirds of students have a broad general command of basic geographic skills insofar as the analysis and comprehension of information is concerned. This section received a satisfactory rating by the TAC.

## INTERPRETING GRAPHS, CHARTS AND TABLES

The grade 10 Assessment included 10 items (45-48, 56, 62, 65, 68-70) that required students to interpret and to draw information from a variety of graphs, charts and tables. Item 48, which involved using a table showing monthly precipitation and temperature, was answered correctly the most often (76.5%). However, a similar table caused students much more difficulty, with only 23.9% answering correctly (item 47). It appears that this item caused difficulty because it involved the manipulation of numbers. In many cases, students seemed to have had difficulty in calculating a temperature range involving negative and positive numbers. In other cases, students seem to have used the precipitation figures rather than those for temperature - another cause of students misreading an item.

Sixty-eight point three percent (68.3%) of students answered both items 65 and 68 correctly, the first involving a table and the second a type of bar chart. Sixty-two point three percent (62.3%) of students correctly interpreted a diagram involving wind, temperature and elevation (item 56).

Other items on graphs and charts were answered correctly by 50% to 60% of students. It is notable, however, that although 59.3% of students correctly read the graph in item 45, another 22.3% totally misunderstood it. Item 62, which presented a table of quantity and value of catch in the Atlantic fisheries, though answered correctly by 56.2% of students, was misunderstood by another 21.8% who appear to have misread or misunderstood the item and used the figures for quantity of catch rather than value. Another table, this time of Canadian exports, appeared in item 70 and was interpreted correctly by 58.6% of students. There is no obvious explanation for the relatively high proportion of wrong answers to what should have been a simple item of tabulation, involving working out Canada's third-largest export market. Item 69, based upon a bar chart, was answered correctly by 54.1% of students, but it is possible that those who got it wrong did so due to errors in calculation, since the item demanded turning the chart into numbers and working out a percentage. Finally, item 46, which was admittedly difficult and complex, involving a specific knowledge of the distribution of soil-types, was answered correctly by 49.2% of students.

The distribution of correct responses among the items involving charts, graphs, and tables is as follows:

70% or more correct responses - 1 item
60-69% correct responses - 3 items
50-59% correct responses - 3 items
40-49% correct responses - 1 item
30-39% correct responses - 1 item
20-30% correct responses - 1 item

## ESSAY-WRITING

Literacy is obviously a fundamental goal of education and is something to which all subjects can make a contribution. This is especially the case in Social Studies which, by its very nature, puts a heavy emphasis on both the spoken and the written word. Students must be able to read and understand all kinds of materials: textbooks, newspapers and magazines, reference books, official publications, and so on. They must also be able to convert what they read (and hear and see and experience) into their own written words. The higher level skills which are so important to Social Studies strongly emphasize the ability to present a viewpoint, to make a statement, to pursue an argument, to make oneself understood, in both spoken and written form. In short, the ability to read and write effectively is an integral part of any Social Studies curriculum.

Thus, the grade 10 Assessment included a compulsory essay item, which was intended both to assess students' knowledge of geography on a particular topic and their ability to organize and express this knowledge in a systematic and coherent way. Put simply, the essay item was intended to find out how well students could organize and present what they knew and understood on a topic in some three to five paragraphs.

Students were offered a choice between two topics and, for each topic, they had a choice of one of three elements. The actual item appeared as follows:

> *Answer either TOPIC 1 on "The Agricultural Interior" OR TOPIC 2 on "The North" in essay format of 3-5 paragraphs (an introductory paragraph, elaborating paragraphs, and a concluding paragraph).*
>
> *NOTE: The essay will be evaluated on how well you discuss the topic as well as on sentence structure, usage, and mechanics (punctuation, capitalization, and spelling).*
>
> *TOPIC 1* *THE AGRICULTURAL INTERIOR*
>
> *Farming in the Agricultural Interior has experienced major problems related to the following factors:*
>
> *a) climatic, b) environmental, c) economic.*
>
> *How has any ONE of the above factors (a, b, or c) created problems in The Agricultural Interior recently? What solutions are there to the problems you have identified?*
>
> *OR*
>
> *TOPIC 2*
>
> *THE NORTH*
>
> *Resource Development in The North is associated with major problems related to the following factors:*
>
> *a) climatic, b) environmental, c) economic.*
>
> *How has any ONE of the above factors (a, b, or c) created problems in The North recently? What solutions are there to the problems you have identified?*

Of the two topics, 41.9% of students chose to write about the Agricultural Interior and 52.9% wrote on The North. Four point six percent (4.6%) of students did not answer this particular item. Of the three factors - climate, environmental, and economic - students' choices were as follows: climatic 45.7%; environmental 29.7%; economic 20%. There is nothing in particular to remark about the selection of topics, except to note that more students chose to write about The North than about The Agricultural Interior. This is perhaps mildly surprising since students presumably spend more time studying The Agricultural Interior than they do The North and also because one might expect it to be more familiar to them. However, an explanation might lie in the fact that so many students chose climate as the factor they wished to explain. It seems likely that the combination of north and climate made for a clearly demarcated, relatively easy-to-manage topic. It is worth noting that climate was so much more often selected than either environment or economy. In one sense, this is not unexpected in a Geography program, but it is a little surprising that so few students chose environment, given the prominence of the topic in the news and in public opinion.

As already noted, students' essays were marked for geographical knowledge and for the ability to organize and present information in essay form. Marking and evaluating essays, or indeed any other form of written language, is notoriously subjective. Repeated experiments have shown wide variability among different markers and, indeed, between different evaluations of the same marker. There are various ways of dealing with this phenomenon, including the provision of detailed answer keys, the training of markers, the careful supervision and second-reading of marked scripts. In the case of the grade 10 Assessment, it was decided to employ the method known as The Structure of the Observed Learning Outcome (SOLO) as described in the book by Biggs and Collis, (1981).

The SOLO Taxonomy is a tool to analyze the quality of students' responses in an objective and systematic way. It assists teachers to discriminate between material which has been well learned from that which has been poorly learned, much in the same way as mature thought is distinguishable from immature thought. A brief description of the method is found on pages 167-171 of Chapter 7 of this report.

Using the SOLO criteria and categories, the quality of students' responses were assessed as shown in Table 9.5 below.

Table 9.5

**OVERALL SOLO LEVEL**

| A<br>Prestructural | B<br>Unistructural | C<br>Multistructural | D<br>Relational | E<br>Extended Abstract | No Response |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 26.9% | 33.5% | 26.5% | 8.6% | 0.1% | 4.3% |

These results obviously merit some commentary. It should be noted at the outset that the designers of the SOLO taxonomy do not expect many students at the grade 10 level to answer at either level D or E, and certainly not in a setting where they are working within a time-limit which allows only for the writing of what is essentially a first draft. One would have hoped that a somewhat higher response would have been obtained in Level D, Relational, and perhaps in Level E, Extended Abstract, but it must be emphasized that this represents a sophisticated level of work and, even in the best circumstances, only a few grade 10 students would achieve it. This said, however, it remains true that the percentage of students whose work was assessed as Level C, Multistructural, was disappointing. The Technical Advisory Committee felt that this result was below expectations. At the grade 10 level, one would not normally expect to find 60.4% of students writing only at Prestructural or Unistructural levels. There are, of course, certain factors to be taken into account: students were writing against the pressure of limited time; they were writing on a topic not necessarily of their choice; and their answers were in first draft form only, since there was no opportunity for reflection and polishing. At the same time, research in other countries suggests that these results are not necessarily untypical. There is a world of difference between having the time to write and rewrite, to think and polish, and having to write quickly under pressure. Moreover, the SOLO taxonomy is as yet unfamiliar to most Manitoba teachers and students, and since it is a method which can be used to improve as well as to evaluate essay-writing skills, it is perhaps unfair to expect students to perform well on it without previous experience.

All this said, however, the evidence here suggests that grade 10 students are not writing as well as they should, at least in Social Studies, and are not as skilled as they should be in organizing and presenting information coherently and systematically. There is obviously a case here for encouraging teachers to give students more practice and training in essay-writing, both within the Social Studies program and in cooperation with teachers in all disciplines. Given that there is a great deal of important content in the grade 10 Geography program, and since essay-writing requires both time and practice, this will require teachers to find ways of combining content and skills in more effective ways. In this effort Manitoba Education and Training and the teacher-education institutions have an important part to play.

The SOLO taxonomy offers many opportunities for teachers and students to identify, clarify and put into practice the habits of mind and skills that lead to clear and effective writing and may well be a useful tool in this regard. There is evidence from outside Manitoba that much teaching is still dominated by short-answer items, worksheets, and the rote use of textbooks. (Goodlad, 1984); Morrissett, 1980). To the extent that this is the case in Manitoba, we obviously need to correct it. In any event, in Social Studies, as elsewhere, we need to place a higher priority on teaching students to write clear, sustained and effective prose.

On the more basic aspects of writing, the percentage of students performing in each category for sentence structure and usage are reported in Table 9.6 and for mechanics in Table 9.7.

Table 9.6

SENTENCE STRUCTURE AND USAGE

| A | B | C | D | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Insufficient Data | Low | Middle | High | No Response |
| 7.9% | 19.9% | 46.8% | 20.8% | 4.6% |

Table 9.7

MECHANICS (PUNCTUATION, CAPITALIZATION, SPELLING)

| A | B | C | D | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Insufficient Data | Low | Middle | High | No Response |
| 8.0% | 12.9% | 42.1% | 31.8% | 5.3% |

## ATTITUDE AND VALUE OBJECTIVES

The Social Studies overview of the curriculum (1985) has this to say about the attitudes and values that it seeks to develop in students:

> "The attitude and value skill objectives are to assist students in developing attitudes, feelings, sensitivities, interests, and values, which enable them to become more effective and responsible citizens. The attitude and value objectives include the dispositions which will help students understand and empathize with those who are different from themselves as well as help them understand their own attitudes, interests, feelings, sensitivities, and values. Students must be encouraged to examine the evidence for their positions (i.e., values, attitudes, etc.) and to defend them. The following are examples:
>
> - to develop tolerant attitudes towards other individuals and groups and, at the same time, establish some reasonable criteria for judging and discriminating among different opinions;
> - to develop a positive attitude toward their own and others' feelings;

> - to examine the variety of attitudes, feelings, values, etc., that are possible in given situations and to compare them to their own in similar situations;
> - to develop an appreciation for such procedural values as respect for truth, freedom, toleration, fairness, and rational thought.
>
> The intention of the Social Studies program is to present opportunities for students to identify, explain, and evaluate their own, as well as others, feelings, beliefs, and values. This process involves asking students to identify or recall the actions of an individual or group in a specific situation, explain why they think such behaviour occurred, infer what attitudes are implied, and analyze their own behaviour and attitudes.
>
> It also involves a process of establishing some reasonable criteria for judging different opinions. These objectives usually involve discussion or interaction of some type between students and teachers; students and students; students and community members. The objectives attempt to encourage students to express opinions, present arguments, evaluate strengths and weakness, discuss the pros and cons" (p. 11).

The attitudes and values section of the 1989 Social Studies Assessment consisted of 20 items (102-121). None of them was such that it could be marked as objectively right or wrong. Rather, they were intended to provide some indication of what students thought about issues that were connected with or arose from the subject-matter of the grade 10 program. Of particular interest is item 102 which asked for students' assessment of the grade 10 Geography program. It is to be noted that 43.2% of students said that they either like it (32.3%) or liked it very much (11.0%); while only 18.4% expressed dislike. It should also be noted that 36.2% of students apparently felt neither positively nor negatively about the program. While it is very encouraging that relatively few students expressed active dislike of the program, it would be pleasant to be able to reduce the relatively large number of indifferent students. Unfortunately, it is not possible to tell whether these students are the same ones who reported a low rate of participation in classroom activities.

The most striking feature of the responses to the items on this section of the test was the high proportion of students who indicated that they were undecided about a particular statement. Of the 20 items in this section, the undecideds were the highest category in six and the second-highest in eight. Even on an item that asked whether or not the Maritime Provinces would not be better off to join the United States, although 61.8% of students disagreed with the suggestion and only 9.4% agreed, 26.4% said they were undecided (item 114). In only two items did the percentage of undecideds fall below 20%, and one of those (item 106) was 19.5%. The other was item 107, which asked whether farmers should be allowed to use harmful crop-sprays, where 16.4% indicated that they were undecided.

The 1984 Social Studies Assessment also found a high proportion of undecideds, albeit among grade 9 rather than grade 10 students. As it was then, it remains difficult to know why this should be so. It could, of course, be a case of students not wishing to give clear-cut answers to items which are admittedly complex and on which one needs more information before a reasonable answer can be provided. On balance, however, it seems unlikely that grade 10 students are this sophisticated and it seems more reasonable to assume that they describe themselves as undecided because they are unfamiliar with the issues involved. Since these issues spring directly from the grade 10 course, and indeed in some cases are addressed in the textbook, and since moreover some of them should also have been touched on in grade 9, not to mention their being frequently in the news, it is a little surprising that grade 10 students would not have opinions on them. They do not, after all, generally find it difficult at this age to have definite opinions on most things. All this might indicate, though it is impossible to be sure, that not enough is being done in all classrooms to connect the subject matter of the classroom with the concerns and issues that exist in the world at large. This might be particularly the case in those classrooms which do not address current issues or move much beyond the textbook, as identified in the previous section. After the combined impact of both grade 9 and grade 10, for example, it is a little surprising to find that 40.6% of grade 10 students have no opinion on whether Canada is or is not too closely linked with the U.S.A. in international politics (item 119). It is not a question of whether they should disagree or agree with this viewpoint, but rather that 40.6% of them felt unable or unwilling to express an opinion either way. It seems reasonable to conclude that many of these students have not been encouraged to address such issues as part of their Social Studies program and that, perhaps, their classroom experience has been such that they have not dealt with current and persisting issues. Admittedly, grade 10 students are at an age when items of a political nature do not hold a high priority and there is no reason why they should. However, the items did not call for a reasoned argument but merely for an indication of agreement or disagreement. In these circumstances, and given the nature and goals of both the grade 9 and grade 10 programs, the high proportion of undecideds is notable.

Nonetheless, the items in this section of the test did attract a definite response, either positive or negative, from most students. One must obviously approach the data with some caution and one must be careful not to make too much of it, but, in general terms, three impressions emerge.

The first is that a substantial minority of students express what might best be called a sense of moderate nationalism. Thirty-nine point seven percent (39.7%) disagreed with the proposition that Canada should allow unlimited foreign investment (item 104), while 38.9% disagreed with the suggestion that Canada should sell water to the United States (item 112). Sixty point five percent (60.5%) agreed that Canada should take steps to reduce U.S. influence over its economy (item 120), and 40.9% agreed that Canada was too closely linked with the U.S. internationally (item 119). It should be noted, however, that in only one case are these views held by a majority of students. Most students, it appears, are either undecided or unwilling to endorse any strongly nationalistic stand.

Perhaps not unexpectedly, and this is the second impression to emerge from the data, students do take a stronger stand on environmental issues, where clear majorities emerge. Thus, 73% oppose crop-spraying if it might be harmful to future generations (item 107); 58% oppose West Coast logging if it conflicts with Indian land claims (item 111); 69.9% oppose the building of airports on agricultural land (item 115). However, only 44.9% feel that large oil tankers should not be allowed to cross Arctic waters (item 110). These results in general are perhaps what one would expect at a time when environmental items are so much in the news and from students enroled in a Geography program which obviously lends itself to discussion of environmental issues. Of all the items in the attitudes and values section of the test, it was only those dealing with the environment that attracted clear-cut majority responses, save for item 105, where 69.9% of students disagreed with a statement that Canada is over-populated.

The third impression that arises from the data is that no more than half the students take a generally open-minded and generous stance to the world. Sixty-one point four percent (61.4%) of them agree that race or religion should not be a factor when considering immigrants to Canada (item 106). Forty-eight point three percent (48.3%) think that rich provinces should help their poorer counterparts (item 113), and 52.1% think that the government should work to reduce the gap between rich and poor Canadians (item 118). Forty-five point one percent (45.1%) think that Native people should control economic development in the North (item 109). Interestingly, these figures drop markedly where an item suggests some measure of sacrifice. For example, when faced with the suggestion that Canadians should reduce their standard of living to help poor countries, 28.7% agree but 40.4% disagree (item 117). Similarly, in response to the idea that Canada should raise taxes in order to increase its contribution to the United Nations, 6.8% indicate their support and 62.6% their opposition (item 116). Here, as elsewhere, the undecideds cloud the picture, and one should obviously be cautious not to make too much of the data, but it does seem that grade 10 students are not overly altruistic in their approach to the world. If the world is, in fact, becoming a global village and if it is becoming increasingly interdependent, it is not clear that students have yet developed the attitudes, values and beliefs that will contribute to the well-being of all the world's people. On the other hand, this finding is not inconsistent with the psychological research that suggests that many students think in largely egocentric and conventional terms during their adolescent years (Piaget, 1967; Kohlberg & Gilligan, 1971).

## SOCIAL PARTICIPATION OBJECTIVES

The Social Studies curriculum (1985) defines the social participation objectives of the program as follows:

> "The social participation skill objectives are designed to help develop informed people who will participate actively in society (i.e., to criticize it constructively and to work to improve it where necessary) and participate effectively with others to achieve mutual goals. They are concerned with the relationship and interaction of one student with another or with a group in or out of school. Examples of social participation skills are stated below:
>
> - helping and working with other students;
> - participating and interacting positively in classroom activities such as discussions, debates, presentations, and projects;
> - participating and working effectively with others in groups and organizations to achieve mutual goals such as student councils, community agencies or organizations;
> - participating actively in society, i.e., participating in volunteer work that helps young children, the elderly, ill, handicapped; participating in (or observing) efforts directed toward solving some community problems; criticizing society constructively and working to improve it where necessary; participating in a political campaign of a candidate of the student's own choice, writing letters to elected officials, etc" (pp.11-12).

It will be seen that, broadly speaking, there are therefore two categories of social participation: first, that which takes place in the classroom in the form of students working together and becoming actively involved in their own learning; and, second, that which calls for the application of what is learned in the classroom to life outside it. This two-fold categorization was reflected in the items used on the grade 10 test. Of the 21 items devoted to social participation (items 81-101), eight dealt with involvement outside the classroom (86-88, 97-101), and 13 with participation in classroom activities (81-85, 89-96). It should be borne in mind also that a few items straddle the boundary between the two groups, in that they deal with in-class activities that raise implications for out-of-class involvement, as is seen, for example, in items 86-88.

The general picture that emerges from the responses to these items indicates that the grade 10 program is having some success in arousing students' interest in topics and issues that arise from the program, but that this interest rarely translates into direct involvement or action. For example, 70.7% of students report that Social Studies has influenced them to watch TV programs, read newspapers, and generally discuss issues at least somewhat during the past year (item 99). However, when asked if they are more likely "to become involved in issues affecting our planet and society", the proportion of positive responses drops to 42.6%, with another 39.5% reporting no change, and 14.5% saying that they are "less likely" to become involved (item 101). It is difficult to know what to make of this last figure, but it is worth noting that there is a drop between taking an interest in current issues (70.7%) and being prepared to become involved (42.6%). At the same time, it must be remembered that this divided response is typical of the adult population at large. Indeed, if the research on political participation is to be believed, the fact that 42.6% of students are willing to consider becoming involved is positively encouraging (Mishler, 1979). In short, at least when it comes to arousing students' awareness of and interest in current events and issues, the grade 10 program is meeting with some degree of success. It may well be that this is also a reflection of the general thrust of the K-12 Social Studies Curriculum which students have experienced in earlier grades.

This is also consistent with the responses to items 87 and 88, which indicate that a majority of students from time to time study or discuss community problems and ways in which people can become involved in social and political issues. Sixty-five point one percent (65.1%) of students report that at least a few times a year they discuss how people can become so involved (item 87), and 64.4% report that they simply study community problems (item 88). These figures suggest that a healthy proportion of teachers are taking advantage of the opportunities provided by the curriculum to engage students in current and local issues, thus helping to make the curriculum more interesting and presumably more relevant to students, while at the same time helping to stimulate the interest and awareness upon which social participation must obviously be based.

When it comes to actual student involvement here and now, as opposed to thinking about it in the future, the results suggest that most classrooms have not embraced this aspect of teaching. For example, 70.5% of students state that Social Studies has never influenced them to take part in a school activity (such as the United Nations or the Red Cross (item 98)); 64.6% state that they have never participated in activities "showing concern for other areas of North America or the world" (item 97); and 45.1% state that they have never been involved in community work (item 100). In the same vein, 83.2% of students report that they have never written to a newspaper, a politician, or anyone else, concerning a Social Studies topic (item 86). In a sense, these results are not surprising. However, the Social Studies curriculum does place an emphasis upon active and informed citizenship and the grade 10 Geography program contains many topics that have clear political dimensions. The kinds of activities described by the test items are hardly contentious and can be found in some schools all across the province. Since one of the goals of the Social Studies curriculum, as indeed of education generally, is to develop an informed and committed citizenship in students, it is reasonable to assume that those teachers, students, and schools who are not active in this area could do more and should be encouraged to do so. Indeed, this is consistent with the findings and recommendations for grade 9 in the Social Studies Assessment 1984, Final Report and the relevant recommendations are worth repeating here:

1. "The importance of the other objectives in the guide should not be downplayed but it is suggested that teachers be reminded that social participation skills are an important aspect of the Social Studies curriculum.

2. Furthermore, Manitoba Education and Training should find out what some teachers are doing to promote these participating skills and publicize their activities to other teachers.

3. Implementation efforts and inservice activity should emphasize the importance of social participation objectives".

The other aspect of the social participation objectives of the Social Studies curriculum concerns not activity outside the classroom, but involvement and participation in learning within it. Here, the responses to the relevant test items present a mixed picture. They suggest that in most classrooms there is at least some degree of student involvement in their own learning. For example, 73.6% of students report that they discuss or express opinions on Social Studies topics at least once a month (item 84), and 76.1% report that they discuss current events at least that often (item 93). Fifty-eight point eight percent (58.8%) report that they participate in group activities in the classroom at least a few times a year (item 83), and on a related item the figure increases to 69.3% (item 92). However, the converse of these last figures should also be noted: approximately one-third of students report that they are never involved in such activities (29.3% on item 92, and 39.9% on item 83). Moreover, 50.4% of students report that they never make oral presentations or reports to class (item 89). While it is encouraging to note that many of the province's grade 10 classes enjoy a reasonable balance of teaching and learning activities, with students being actively involved to a reasonable degree, there is apparently a proportion of classrooms, running at approximately one-third, where this is not true. Besides the data already reported, for example, it should be noted that 29.0% of students report that their classes never use current events (item 94) and 23.2% report that they never use sources other than the textbook (item 96).

The responses to the items in this section also make it clear that some teaching resources are not as widely used as they might be. Seventy-two point six percent (72.6%) of students report that their Social Studies classes never go on field trips or visits outside the classroom (item 85), and 64.8% report that they never listen to outside speakers as part of their Social Studies program (item 91). In a subject such as Social Studies, and particularly in the case of grade 10 Geography with its North American focus, this seems to indicate that valuable resources are not being used. At the same time it must be realized that there are reasons for this. It is certainly not the case that teachers neither know about nor wish to use such resources. It is worth noting that in response to item 82, 79.1% of students report that they take part in imaginary tours, for example through slides and videotapes, at least a few times a year. There are also teachers who would like to bring in speakers and to organize field trips but find it difficult or impossible to do so. The semester system can present problems, as can a wide range of administrative and logistical barriers. In particular, such methods can disrupt the plans and priorities of teachers in other subjects, since a field trip will usually require at least half a day out of school. While it is perhaps disappointing to see such results, there are understandable reasons underlying them. If we wish these methods to be more widely used, we must look beyond teachers to administrators, school boards, and others to make it possible.

Overall, the evidence suggests that the grade 10 Geography classrooms are for the most part healthy learning environments with a fair degree of students involvement and a variety of teaching methods and resources. In this regard and as noted in the attitudes and values section, it is worth remembering that 43.2% of students report they like the grade 10 Geography course or like it very much, although it is also true that 36.2% report that they neither like nor dislike it and 18.4% report dislike (item 102). At the same time, the test data suggest that somewhere around one-third of grade 10 classrooms are not taking advantage of the resources and opportunities that exist to make the course more relevant and interesting to students. These results are not all that different from those obtained in the 1984 Social Studies Assessment, especially when one bears in mind that in 1984 it was the Grade 9 Canada Today course that was assessed and the Grade 9 lends itself more readily to the use of current events and activity methods than does the grade 10 Geography course. Some reasons for such differences as do exist might also be due to the fact that the Grade 9 program is spread over the school year, while the great majority of grade 10 programs are taught on a semestered basis. This may help to explain why the 1989 figures are higher than those of 1984. The relevant comparisons are reported in Table 9.8 below.

Table 9.8

**Comparison of Students' Social Participation Activities: 1984 and 1989**

| Type of Activity | 1984 (Grade 9 Data) | 1989 (Grade 10 Data) |
|---|---|---|
| Visiting speakers | 58% Never | 64.8% Never |
| Field trips | 61% Never | 72.6% Never |
| Study community problems | 34% Never | 35.0% Never |
| Writing to politicians, etc. | 82% Never | 83.2% Never |
| Studying how people can affect issues | 24% Never | 33.4% Never |
| Working in small groups | 19% Never | 29.3% Never |

One must remember that there are some difficulties inherent in comparing grade 10 with grade 9, especially in view of the differences in the Social Studies program in the two years, but, this said, it seems reasonable to conclude that there continues to be a substantial percentage of classrooms where the goals and principles of the Social Studies program are not being met, especially in regard to approaches to teaching and learning.

In this type of assessment the interpretation of data obviously depends upon the expectations that one brings to the task since there is no definitive or objective benchmark against which to measure them. The data observed on the thinking and research skills objectives appear to be more or less consistent with those of the 1984 Social Studies Assessment, although it must be noted that in 1984 grades 9 and 12 were chosen for assessment, and not grade 10. Moreover, anyone who remembers marking departmental examinations in the 1960's will find little cause for either surprise or alarm in these results. It must always be remembered, moreover, that one should not read too much into the results of a relatively small number of multiple-choice items. The data reported here is at best suggestive, it is certainly not definitive.

The Technical Advisory Committee rated the majority of items as good to very good in terms of clarity and quality and judged them to be "about right" in terms of difficulty. The Technical Advisory Committee also reported that the results were about what it expected, although a little below expectations in places, and especially in the case of some of the map location items (items 71-80).

If one categorizes the correct responses to the items that were developed to assess the thinking and research skills objectives, the following results in Table 9.9 emerge:

Table 9.9

Percentage of Correct Responses to Items on Thinking and Research Skills

| | 0-29% | 30-39% | 40-49% | 50-59% | 60-69% | 70-79% | 80-100% |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of Items | 2 | 2 | 5 | 9 | 9 | 5 | 1 |
| Percentage of Items per Category | 6% | 6% | 15% | 27% | 27% | 15% | 3% |

As noted earlier, these results must be treated with some caution and with the realization that the responses to some items could legitimately be raised into a higher category. With these observations in mind, it is still possible to draw some tentative conclusions from this information.

Perhaps the most obvious point that emerges is that while some 60% or more of grade 10 students appear to have a solid grounding in the skills of thinking and research as applied to Geography, there remains a substantial minority who do not. It might be that there is some relationship between this and the data reported in the social participation section of this chapter which showed that somewhere around one-third of grade 10 Geography classes apparently do not get very far beyond the pages of the textbook.

Some of the incorrect responses to the items on the skills section of the Assessment can be attributed to students' failure to properly read or interpret the items. This is, in part, a matter of practice and experience and it would not be surprising if students do sometimes rush to answer an item before they really understand it. This happens in most examinations at any level. Moreover, it is likely that multiple-choice items of the complexity that were used as part of the Assessment were unfamiliar to a number of students, who therefore were uncertain how to respond to them. There might also have been an element of nervousness on the part of some students which made them more prone to making elementary mistakes than they might otherwise have been. Conversely, some teachers reported that in some cases students did not appear to take the Assessment all that seriously since it did not "count for marks". Indeed, in some cases, schools or school divisions did not take the Assessment as seriously as they should have, an attitude which no doubt was picked up by students. It must be emphasized that the fundamental purpose of the provincial assessment system is to identify strengths and weaknesses in programs of study and thereby to improve them. It is important, therefore, that everyone involved with an Assessment does everything possible to help it accomplish its purpose.

At the same time, many students in grade 10 are still at a stage of cognitive development where they are not yet skilled in suspending judgment and holding one variable or element in a problem constant while they juggle others in order to find the most viable solution. They are still inclined to be attracted to one particular aspect of a problem, especially if it is prominent in the way in which a problem is displayed or presented. As a result, they form snap judgments and reach premature closure.

Some of the mistakes in this section of the Assessment appear also to have been the result of arithmetical error. Certainly, students did less well than expected on items where they had to perform some arithmetical operation, such as subtracting to find a temperature range or converting geographically-presented information into percentages.

On the other hand, most students appear to have had little difficulty in tackling applied comprehension exercises. The cartoons caused little difficulty and students appear to have grasped the meaning of the poem that was presented to them.

Overall, a mixed picture emerges. Obviously there are students - and indeed a majority of them - whose skills are being developed and applied effectively. At the same time, in a significant minority of cases, this important aspect of teaching and learning appears to need more attention. The task is to make it possible for these students to benefit from the same experience and expertise as their successful counterparts.

## OBSERVATIONS AND DISCUSSION

Students' responses to the items dealing with knowledge of facts and generalizations present a mixed picture. On the one hand, most students had some command of basic factual information: for example, they knew that the U.S.A. is Canada's chief trading partner; that fishing zones are a major issue between Newfoundland and St. Pierre and Miquelon; that the Grand Banks are an important fishing area; and so on. On the other hand, there were some surprising gaps in their knowledge, especially regarding the Canadian Shield and the relative locations of the Great Lakes. In some cases they were familiar with specialized terminology, such as plate tectonics, but not in others, for example, localization or region. Overall, a picture emerges which is fairly congruent with that for the thinking and research skills subtest: it seems that about 60% of students fared reasonably well on the assessment, but that a substantial minority, some 40% did less well than might have been expected.

It was notable that the proportion of correct responses increased in the later units of the course. This was presumably due to the fact that these units had been taught more recently and thus were fresher in the students' minds, except, of course, in the case of those non-semestered students who might have completed some of these units in their first semester. However, the evidence does not allow us to ascertain what, if any, the relationship is between semestering and performance on an end-of-year test. It might well be, however, that there is a case for teachers and students spending more time on cumulative and sequential reinforcement of facts, concepts, and skills.

There is some evidence in the responses to the items in this section of the Assessment that students are not as familiar as they might be with specialized geographic terms. For example, the word "isohyets" was unfamiliar to most students, and while students can give a general meaning to such terms as "region" or "localization", they do not use them in their specific geographic sense.

Although two items on the Canadian Shield were not answered as well as might have been expected, there is no evidence from the items in this part of the Assessment that students are either especially well informed or especially badly informed about any particular region of Canada or North America generally. Though the proportion of correct responses does vary from region to region, this can be explained by the nature of the items in each particular section of the Assessment. One or two items answered especially well or badly, for example, can have a major impact on the overall mean for a subtest.

Perhaps the dominant message of the Assessment, so far as knowledge of facts and generalizations is concerned, is that while a majority of students appear to be performing satisfactorily, a substantial minority is performing below expectations. It is difficult to determine the reasons for this given the nature of this Assessment but it is to be hoped that the newly available Teacher's Guide (1989) and the revised edition of the textbook will help to rectify the problems.

The figures generated by the essay-writing section of the Assessment suggest that, if students are having difficulty writing in a "relational" or "multistructural" manner (to use the SOLO terminology), it is not because they lack control of the basic building blocks of written expression. Some two-thirds (or slightly more) of grade 10 students place in the middle or high categories in terms of sentence structure and mechanics. While it is true that the "middle" category does not demand an especially high standard (see the descriptions of the categories provided previously in Chapter 7), it is nonetheless an indicator that students are able to present their information and ideas with reasonable clarity. If one puts categories A and B together, one finds that just over a fifth of students are having fundamental problems in writing. Further, if one assumes (not unreasonably) that there is a group of students at the low end of the "middle" category whose performance is only marginally satisfactory, we arrive at the two-thirds/one-third division that has emerged elsewhere in these findings. Approximately one-third of students, it seems, are experiencing difficulties with the grade 10 program.

Whether this should be a cause for concern is perhaps a matter of educational philosophy. One could argue that standards are standards and therefore some students must fail. This was more or less the operating assumption of departmental examinations in the days that the province used them. If one adds the students who failed those examinations to those who never even wrote them, we arrive at roughly a two-thirds/one-third division. However, it must surely be a cause of some concern that one-third of students are finding the program difficult, with all the obvious consequences for attitude, morale and motivation, not only towards Geography or Social Studies, but towards education in general. There is, of course, also the question of whether, as a society, we can afford so many ill-prepared students. It would be useful to know more about these students and the source of their problems. Are they, for example, a product of the merging of 100 and 101 courses? Are they concentrated in particular areas or groups? Is the curriculum or the textbook and related material the source of the problem? Is the problem one of attitude or ability? And so on.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on the results of the grade 10 written test.

1. **Manitoba Education and Training, the teacher education institutions, and the appropriate professional organizations must do everything possible to encourage teachers to use the revised edition of the textbook and the Teacher's Guide.**

2. **Teachers must be encouraged to use the curriculum guide in order to identify the key instructional objectives of the grade 10 program in the areas of knowledge, concepts, and generalizations.**

3. **Teachers must provide frequent opportunities for students to review work previously taken so that it remains fresh in their minds.**

4. Teachers must plan their units of work so that each builds cumulatively upon the content and skills taught in those that precede it.

5. Manitoba Education and Training and/or the universities should undertake research to ascertain why a significant minority of students appears to be having difficulty with the grade 10 Geography program and what can be done to help them.

6. Manitoba Education and Training and/or other appropriate bodies should prepare teaching materials to help teachers in their teaching of the grade 10 Geography program.

7. Manitoba Education and Training, the teacher training institutions, and the appropriate professional organizations must draw to teachers' attention the importance of the Thinking and Research Skill objectives of the program.

8. Teacher training institutions and inservice planners should ensure that teacher education programs contain an appropriate emphasis on skill development and the evaluation of students' performance.

9. Manitoba Education and Training should increase its efforts to produce and publicize appropriate support materials for teaching and evaluating skills.

10. Teachers must continue to give emphasis to the learning of important map locations, within the general context of emphasizing geographic concepts, skills and processes.

11. Teachers must be encouraged to give appropriate emphasis to skills development and assessment in their own testing and evaluation of students.

12. Superintendents, Trustees, Manitoba Social Science Teachers' Association, the teacher-training institutions, and in-service organizers must be made aware of the importance of skills development together with practical methods of teaching and evaluating skills.

13. Teachers must be encouraged and helped to incorporate writing skills into their teaching of geography.

14. Teachers should ensure that school tests and evaluations in Social Studies incorporate items that call for the use of writing sustained prose.

15. Teachers of Social Studies should find ways of working together with colleagues in other disciplines to improve students' writing.

16. Teachers of Social Studies should involve students in writing that calls for the organization and presentation of facts and opinions.

17. Teachers should be introduced to the SOLO taxonomy for evaluation and should be encouraged to incorporate it into their teaching.

18. The teacher-education institutions should ensure that teacher-education programs in the Social Studies give adequate attention to the importance of incorporating the teaching of writing skills into Social Studies.

19. Manitoba Education and Training should examine the Social Studies curriculum in order to ensure that it provides sufficient emphasis upon the learning and practice of writing skills.

20. Teachers should give more attention to using the grade 10 Social Studies program to address issues and problems affecting Canada and the world, so that students develop informed opinions on them.

21. Teachers should give more attention to enhancing the global implications of what is taught in the grade 10 program, so that, for example, it continues to develop the theme of spaceship earth begun in earlier grades.

22. Teachers should be made aware of the social participation goals of the Social Studies curriculum.

23. Teachers should be encouraged to make greater use of field trips and speakers on topics relevant to the curriculum.

24. School administrators and trustees should be encouraged to make it easier for teachers to incorporate field trips into their Social Studies teaching.

25. Teachers should place greater emphasis on the value of involving students more actively in their own learning, especially through group work and research projects.

26. Teachers should be encouraged, and provided with the necessary resources, to make more use of sources beyond the authorized textbook.

27. Teachers should be encouraged to prepare students for involvement in issues that are relevant to the topics studied as part of the curriculum.

28. Teachers and administrators should be made aware of the value of students writing to politicians and public figures and performing other politically relevant acts that are compatible with the objectives of the grade 10 Geography program and that serve worthwhile educational goals.

29. Manitoba Education and Training should explore ways in which those teachers who are teaching effectively in the spirit of the curriculum can make their experience and expertise available to their colleagues.

# CHAPTER 10

# Grade Ten Teacher Survey

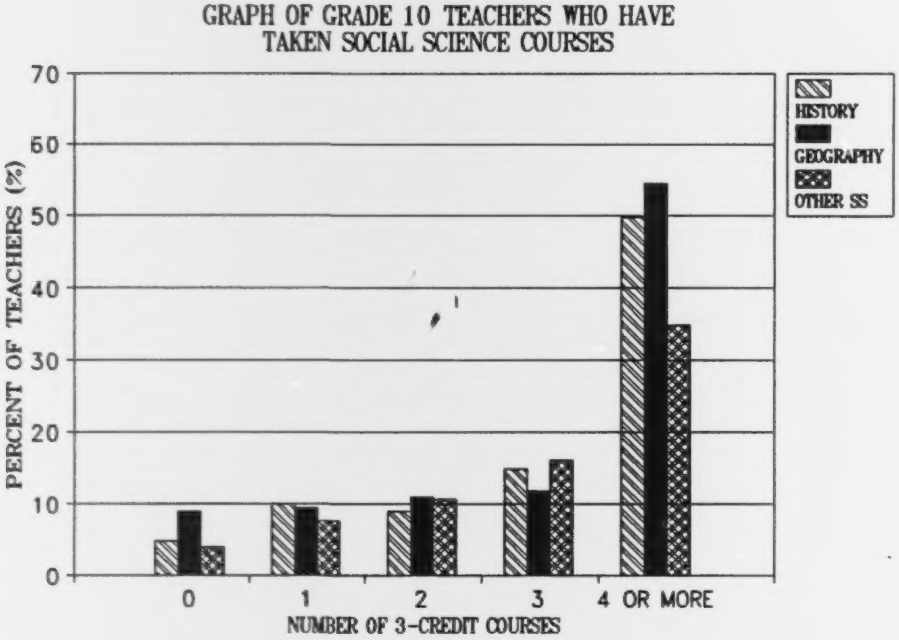
The grade 10 Teacher Survey was sent to 277 teachers, and 255 completed surveys were returned.

## SURVEY RESULTS

### TEACHER BACKGROUND

Teachers were asked to report how many History, Geography, or social science courses they had taken as part of their own education. The question was intended to provide some information on the academic preparation of teachers. The results indicate that the great majority of grade 10 Geography teachers have at least some university background in this subject, but that for almost half of them this consists of three or fewer 3-credit courses in an appropriate discipline. Figure 10.1 below presents teachers' responses.

Figure 10.1



It will be noticed that these figures show that only 54.5% of grade 10 Geography teachers report having taken four or more 3-credit courses in Geography. It is not known how many teachers have an actual degree or an academic major in Geography, but it seems clear that almost half of the teachers of Geography (40.2%, in fact) have minimal training in the subject. Even in the larger urban high schools, where one would most readily expect to find a high degree of subject specialization, one finds cases of teachers being assigned to teach Geography or Social Studies who have little or no background in the subject. There is no reason to assume that the situation is very different in smaller schools in which teachers necessarily must teach a range of subjects. It is reasonable to assume that such teachers are more likely to remain tied to the textbook since their academic and professional training will not have given them the command of and the insight into the subject they have to teach. Indeed, it may well be that such teachers are not aware of the potential for student interest and excitement that exists in Geography and Social Studies. Thus is created a situation that is fair neither to students nor teachers. It may be that this also explains some of the results in the student achievement section of this assessment. There is a general feeling among Social Studies teachers that their subject is often assigned to teachers with training in other subjects or with extra-curricular expertise, since school administrators sometimes appear to work on the principle that anyone can teach Social Studies and that it requires no particularly specialized knowledge or training. The Assessment provides some reason for thinking that this is indeed the case. Against all this, however, it should also be noted that 91.8% of teachers reported that they felt qualified to teach the course and 86.7% reported that, if they had the choice, they would choose to teach it.

## SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

The items in this section of the Teacher Survey were designed to determine the amount of time spent on Social Studies and the extent to which teachers influence or control administrative decisions which affect their teaching of the subject. The responses, expressed in percentages of the total respondents, appear as follows:

| | | Non-Semestered | Semestered | No Response |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| A. | Is the course you teach non-semestered or semestered? . . . . . . . | 37.3% | 57.6% | 5.1% |

| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Other (specify) | No Response |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| B. | How many days are in 1 cycle of your timetable? . . | 3.9% | 5.5% | 2.0% | 5.1% | 5.9% | 71.0% | 3.9% | 2.7% |

| | | Non-Semestered Courses | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Less Than 105 | 105-140 | 141-175 | 176-210 | 211-240 | Over 240 | No Response |
| C. How many minutes per cycle (per class) do you teach Social Studies? | 2.4% | .8% | 3.1% | 3.5% | 23.1% | 5.1% | 62.0% |

| | Semestered Courses | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Less Than 210 | 211-280 | 281-350 | 351-420 | 421-480 | Over 480 | No Response |
| 8.6% | 5.9% | 3.1% | 14.1% | 20.4% | 9.8% | 38.0% |

D. To what degree are you able to influence the following decisions?

| | Great Influence | Some Influence | Little or No Influence | No Response |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Allocation of time for Social Studies . . | 2.7% | 20.4% | 73.3% | 3.5% |
| 2. Allocation of time to specific topics . . | 68.2 | 21.6 | 6.3 | 3.9 |
| 3. Text book choice . . . . . . . . . . . . | 36.1 | 36.1 | 24.7 | 3.1 |
| 4. Selecting support material . . . . . . . | 72.5 | 21.2 | 2.7 | 3.5 |
| 5. Teaching strategies . . . . . . . . . . . | 87.5 | 9.0 | .8 | 2.7 |
| 6. Evaluation of student progress . . . . . | 82.0 | 14.5 | .8 | 2.7 |
| 7. Inservice activities . . . . . . . . . . | 16.1 | 61.2 | 19.6 | 3.1 |

It will be seen that the majority of schools (71.0%) operate on a six-day cycle on a semestered (57.6%) basis. At the grade 10 level, schools typically operate on the basis of a school-wide timetable arranged by the school administration and so it is not surprising that 73.3% of teachers report that they have little or no influence over time allocation. However, there is considerable flexibility when it comes to course planning and it is notable that 89.8% of teachers report that they have some or great influence over allocating time to specific topics. A large majority of teachers similarly report that they have great influence over the selection of support material, teaching strategies, and methods of evaluating students. A smaller number report having influence over textbook selection but this is understandable given the province's system of approving textbooks and given the increasing cost of textbooks, which makes it difficult to change books once they have been bought. Only 16.1% of teachers report having great influence over inservice activities, though 61.2% of teachers report having some influence. Overall, however, the planning of inservice activities is not apparently seen by most teachers as something in which they are directly involved. This is of some concern in the light of recent research that suggests that inservice activity is only effective when it addresses concerns which teachers see as important and when it is conducted in ways that they see as useful. (Fullan, 1982).

Provincial guidelines recommend that 110-120 hours of instruction should be devoted to the grade 10 Geography program over the course of the school year. Although the guidelines do not explicitly say so, schools which operate on a semestered basis are expected to provide an equivalent amount of time during the course of a semester. Unfortunately, the data generated in this part of the Teacher Survey do not provide a reliable basis for any estimation of how much time is actually allotted to grade 10 Geography by schools. There is some informal and anecdotal evidence that at least some schools are not allotting the recommended amount of time. Even when the allotted time does meet provincial recommendations, there are still a number of interruptions for special events, school activities, and other happenings which are not connected with Geography. If, in fact, insufficient time is being allotted to the program, this is to be regretted and should be corrected. Recent research bears out what common sense and experience both suggest - the more time students spend on a task the more likely they are to learn it successfully. What has come to be called time-on-task is a major element in effective learning. It is disappointing, therefore, that the data do not provide reliable evidence in this respect. It is to be hoped that future assessments will furnish such evidence. In the meantime, it might be useful for the universities or for Manitoba Education and Training to organize a research project to examine what is the current practice in the province's schools.

## THE GOALS OF SOCIAL STUDIES

The following items show how teachers rated various goals of Social Studies, such as are typically found in curriculum documents and in writings about the subject.

There are various views on the role of Social Studies in the curriculum. Please indicate your views on each of the goal statements below.

| | | Strongly Agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | No Response |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A. | The main task of Social Studies is to preserve and transmit cultural heritage . . . . . | 7.5% | 52.9% | 17.6% | 16.5% | 1.2% | 4.3% |
| B. | Social Studies should teach students to make rational decisions about personal and social issues . . . . . . . | 38.4 | 52.9 | 3.1 | 1.6 | .4 | 3.5 |
| C. | Social Studies should provide learners both with an awareness of possible futures and the roles they might play in developing these futures . | 39.6 | 52.2 | 4.7 | .4 | - | 3.1 |
| D. | Social Studies should provide students with the skills necessary to become independent learners . . . | 45.9 | 47.5 | 2.7 | .4 | - | 3.5 |
| E. | Social Studies should teach a body of tested principles and generalizations about human relations and societies . . | 12.2 | 51.8 | 22.0 | 7.1 | 1.2 | 5.9 |
| F. | Social Studies should help students understand the structure of the social sciences . . | 11.4 | 56.5 | 22.4 | 5.1 | .4 | 4.3 |

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What is especially striking in these responses is the high priority assigned to those goals dealing with students learning to become independent, rational decision-makers in personal and social matters, as is shown in the responses to statements B, C, and D above. In comparison there is much less agreement on the importance of transmitting cultural heritage. Indeed, this point (statement A) attracted more opposition than did any other. It might be that this is due in part to the fact that the survey was conducted in the context of Geography rather than of History but, even so, it is notable that this traditional goal of Social Studies education was not nearly so strongly endorsed as were others. Statements E and F which place the Social Studies in the context of learning social science were also less favoured by teachers. It seems clear that teachers for the most part see their primary task as teaching students to think and act rationally and independently and, presumably, approach the grade 10 Geography program in this light. This is reasonably consistent with the general thrust of the provincial Social Studies curriculum as a whole.

## THE CURRICULUM GUIDE AND RELATED INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

The next section of the survey sought information on the curriculum guide. The data on the items in this section suggest that there is a high degree of satisfaction with the curriculum guide.

**How would you rate the 1984 Grade 10 Interim Curriculum Guide on:**

| | | Very Satisfactory | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | No Opinion | No Response |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Social Studies K-12 Guide Overview? | 8.6% | 62.7% | 2.0% | 10.2% | 16.5% |
| 2. | Grade Ten Overview? | 13.3 | 63.1 | 3.5 | 3.9 | 16.1 |
| 3. | Unit Overview? | 12.9 | 61.6 | 5.9 | 3.5 | 16.1 |
| 4. | Topics and Focusing Questions? | 9.8 | 56.1 | 13.3 | 3.9 | 16.9 |
| 5. | Knowledge Objectives? | 11.8 | 60.4 | 6.3 | 4.7 | 16.9 |
| 6. | Thinking and Research Skills Objectives? | 10.6 | 58.4 | 8.2 | 6.3 | 16.5 |
| 7. | Attitude & Value Objectives? | 8.6 | 56.1 | 10.6 | 7.5 | 17.3 |
| 8. | Social Participation Objectives? | 8.2 | 53.7 | 10.6 | 9.4 | 18.0 |
| 9. | Suggested Teaching Strategies and Learning Activities? | 9.0 | 55.7 | 12.2 | 5.9 | 17.3 |
| 10. | Suggested Learning Resources | 9.0 | 53.7 | 10.6 | 7.5 | 19.2 |
| 11. | Suggested Strategies for Evaluation of Students? | 4.7 | 51.8 | 14.5 | 9.8 | 19.2 |
| 12. | How would you rate the grade 10 Curriculum Guide overall? | 7.5 | 66.7 | 5.1 | 4.7 | 16.1 |

As these data show, 76.9% of teachers report that they are using the curriculum guide and 74.2% give it a satisfactory or very satisfactory rating. Only a small minority rate the guide as unsatisfactory. However, some 20% or more of teachers either reported no opinion or simply did not respond to this part of the survey and it is difficult to know what to make of this.

As with the curriculum guide, 72.1% of teachers reported themselves as satisfied with supplementary classroom resources, though again there was a substantial number of no opinion/no response replies to these items. These presumably indicate that a significant minority of teachers, consisting of at least one-third of respondents, make little or no use of Manitoba Education and Training resources. Specific responses are provided on the related items below:

Rate the following teaching resources for your Social Studies program.

| | Very Satisfactory | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | No Opinion | No Response |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Classroom supplementary resources | 9.0% | 63.1% | 12.5% | 5.9% | 9.4% |
| Department of Education resources: | | | | | |
| a) Education Manitoba | 3.9 | 52.2 | 5.5 | 25.9 | 12.5 |
| b) Manitoba Textbook Catalogue | 3.9 | 53.3 | 5.5 | 25.9 | 11.4 |
| c) Library - Video Tapes | 9.0 | 51.4 | 11.4 | 19.2 | 9.0 |
| d) Library - Print Materials | 5.9 | 45.1 | 5.9 | 31.0 | 12.2 |
| e) Library - MERC | 1.6 | 29.8 | 3.1 | 46.7 | 18.8 |

Perhaps the most striking feature of the following part of the Teacher Survey was the high degree of dissatisfaction with the first edition of the approved textbook, Continent of Contrast. Although 30.2% of teachers rated it as satisfactory or very satisfactory, 51.4% gave it an unsatisfactory rating. It is also notable that, on this question, the proportion of teachers indicating no opinion dropped markedly. The textbooks also attracted by far the largest number of written comments. The gist of these comments was that the textbook created difficulties for students, being too difficult for some and too simple for others; that it contained too much material that did not interest students; and that its questions and activities were not always helpful. Since the assessment was conducted, a revised edition of the textbook has appeared, together with a teacher's guide, and preliminary comments suggest that these problems have now been corrected.

Rate the following teaching resources for your Social Studies program.

| | Very Satisfactory | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | No Opinion | No Response |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Approved text:<br>Continent of Contrast<br>(1st edition) | 3.5% | 26.7% | 51.4% | 5.9% | 12.5% |

## ALLOCATION OF TIME TO UNITS

Teachers were asked to estimate approximately how much time they devoted to each unit of the grade 10 Geography program. The results are presented below in Tables 10.1 to 10.7.

### Table 10.1

**Allocation of Time to Unit 1 on Semestered and Non-semestered Basis**

| | | Semestered | | | | Non-semestered | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Unit | Suggested Time Allotment | 3 weeks or Less | 4-6 Weeks | 7-8 Weeks | 9 weeks or more | 3 weeks or Less | 4-6 Weeks | 7-8 Weeks | 9 weeks or More |
| Unit 1: Overview | 3 weeks | 2.6% | 48.4% | 25.5% | 23.5% | 28.4% | 52.7% | 9.5% | 9.6% |

### Table 10.2

**Allocation of Time to Unit 2 on Semestered and Non-semestered Basis**

| | | Semestered | | | Non-semestered | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Unit | Suggested Time Allotment | 5 weeks or Less | 6-10 weeks | 11 weeks or more | 5 weeks or Less | 6-10 Weeks | 11 weeks or More |
| Unit 2: Agricultural Interior | 5 weeks | 14.5% | 77.5% | 8.1% | 57.5% | 39.7% | 2.8% |

### Table 10.3

**Allocation of Time to Unit 3 on Semestered and Non-semestered Basis**

| | | Semestered | | | Non-semestered | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Unit | Suggested Time Allotment | 4 weeks or Less | 5-8 weeks | 9 weeks or more | 4 weeks or Less | 5-8 Weeks | 9 weeks or More |
| Unit 3: The North | 4 weeks | 31.7% | 60.0% | 8.3% | 60.3% | 37.1% | 2.8% |

## Table 10.4

Allocation of Time to Unit 4 on Semestered and Non-semestered Basis

| | | Semestered | | | Non-semestered | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Unit | Suggested Time Allotment | 4 weeks or Less | 5-8 weeks | 9 weeks or more | 4 weeks or Less | 5-8 Weeks | 9 weeks or More |
| Unit 4: Western Cordillera | 4 weeks | 29.2% | 64.2% | 6.4% | 47.1% | 51.4% | 1.4% |

## Table 10.5

Allocation of Time to Unit 5 on Semestered and Non-semestered Basis

| | | Semestered | | | Non-semestered | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Unit | Suggested Time Allotment | 3 weeks or Less | 4-6 weeks | 7 weeks or more | 3 weeks or Less | 4-6 Weeks | 7 weeks or More |
| Unit 5: Atlantic and Appalachia | 3 weeks | 22.3% | 66.2% | 11.5% | 33.3% | 61.8% | 3.2% |

## Table 10.6

Allocation of Time to Unit 6 on Semestered and Non-semestered Basis

| | | Semestered | | | Non-semestered | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Unit | Suggested Time Allotment | 5 weeks or Less | 6-10 weeks | 11 weeks or more | 5 weeks or Less | 6-10 Weeks | 11 weeks or More |
| Unit 6: Industrial Heartland | 5 weeks | 43.5% | 52.7% | 3.9% | 71.2% | 25.8% | 3.0% |

## Table 10.7

Allocation of Time to Unit 8 on Semestered and Non-semestered Basis

| | | Semestered | | | Non-semestered | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Unit | Suggested Time Allotment | 4 weeks or Less | 5-8 weeks | 9 weeks or more | 4 weeks or Less | 5-8 Weeks | 9 weeks or More |
| Unit 8: World Issues | 4 weeks | 75.7% | 20.0% | 4.3% | 79.1% | 20.9% | nil |

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NOTES:

1. Unit 7 is an optional unit with no suggested time allotment and is not included in these tables.
2. Totals only approximate 100.0%.
3. Semestered weeks are converted to the equivalent of non-semestered weeks in order to provide a basis for comparison.

These results have to be interpreted with some caution. In particular, it must be remembered that the weeks of semestered time are here converted to their equivalent in non-semestered time on the ratio of 1:2. In other words, the number of weeks reported by teachers in semestered schools have here been doubled to provide a rough equivalent to a traditional full-year course. There is, therefore, potential for some distortion of the data.

Nonetheless, even with this caution in mind, some conclusions can be drawn. Most obviously, few teachers are able to remain within the suggested time allotments for the units. Most teachers in fact operate within a range of anywhere up to double the suggested time, with a minority spending longer than this on particular units. These teachers presumably find this time in the 30% of unallocated time provided for in the curriculum. This is an understandable response to the pressure of time but it does have the obvious effect of eroding the time that was intended to be devoted to the exploration of issues of particular interest to students but not explicitly included in the program of study.

Not unexpectedly, this state of affairs means that few teachers complete the whole course. Although not reported in the tables, the data do suggest that as the course proceeds, fewer teachers are able to complete each successive unit. In particular, unit 7, which is optional, appears to be taught by only a few teachers, although the figures do not permit a precise enumeration.

Perhaps the most intriguing finding in the tables is that, by and large, teachers in non-semestered schools find it easier to stay at or close to the suggested time allotments than do teachers in semestered settings. One can only guess why this should be so. It might be, for example, that, as teachers organize a unit, they tend to devote one or more discrete lessons to each topic or sub-topic. If this is the case, then clearly it would take longer to work through a unit in a semestered setting, since each lesson there lasts for a longer period of time. Instead of devoting, say, a 45 minute lesson to a topic, a semestered organization would make possible the use of a 70 or 80 minute lesson. Similarly, group work, discussion, and so forth would also last for longer periods of time. It could be said, of course that teachers could overcome this tendency by treating each semestered lesson as consisting of two back-to-back conventional lessons and treating it as a double period. However, there are obvious practical obstacles to such a solution. For one thing, semestered lessons are rarely double the length of traditional class periods. Moreover, it is not easy to reorient students' thinking and attention from one topic to another in such a space of time and there is a natural tendency for teachers to treat any given lesson as a coherent block of time, to be devoted to the exploration of a particular topic.

In addition, in a semestered school the loss of a period for a non-teaching event represents a much greater loss of time than would be the case with a traditional timetable arrangement. Traditionally, for example, a choir practice, a concert, a special program, or whatever, would result in the loss of one 45-minute period. In a semestered school, the loss would be 70 or more minutes and, should such interruptions accumulate over time, as they often do, the results would inevitably be that weeks would have to be devoted to any given unit of work.

Thus, the interesting possibility exists that a semestered organization creates problems for covering a course, especially when courses are not necessarily designed with semestered settings in mind. Given the existing data, this can be no more than a possibility, but it is worth further exploration. If, indeed, a semestered timetable does have such an effect, the implications are well worth exploring, particularly in terms of the impact upon what and how teachers teach and students learn.

## TEACHING STRATEGIES

The Teacher Survey included a question asking teachers to report on the frequency of use of a range of teaching strategies. The results are contained in the items below:

**How often does each of these activities happen in your Social Studies class or as a part of your Social Studies course?**

| | | Daily | Weekly | Monthly | A Few Times a Year | Never | No Response |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Teacher presents information most of the class period while students listen or take notes . | 23.5% | 48.6% | 6.3% | 8.6% | 4.7% | 8.2% |
| 2. | Students express or defend their opinions on different sides of an issue during class . . . | 24.7 | 41.2 | 16.9 | 9.4 | .4 | 7.5 |
| 3. | Students choose research activities or topics that interest them . | 1.6 | 5.5 | 33.7 | 46.7 | 5.1 | 7.5 |
| 4. | Students participate in field, trips, e.g., museums, libraries, businesses . . . . . . . . . . | .4 | 1.6 | 4.7 | 50.6 | 32.5 | 10.2 |
| 5. | Teachers use audio visual resources in class (e.g., films, filmstrips, T.V.) . . . . . . . | 5.1 | 54.5 | 22.7 | 9.4 | 1.2 | 7.1 |
| 6. | Newspapers, magazines are used in classroom . . . . . . . . . . | 5.9 | 40.8 | 23.1 | 22.4 | .4 | 7.5 |
| 7. | Students use primary source materials, e.g., diaries, letters, photos, artifacts . . | .8 | 6.7 | 16.5 | 42.0 | 25.5 | 8.6 |
| 8. | Outside speakers visit the classroom | .8 | .8 | 3.9 | 41.6 | 43.9 | 9.0 |
| 9. | Simulations, games, role playing are used in the classroom . . . | .8 | 3.5 | 14.9 | 40.8 | 30.6 | 9.4 |
| 10. | Students work on: | | | | | | |
| | i) individual projects . . . . . | 5.9 | 20.0 | 29.0 | 35.7 | .8 | 8.6 |
| | ii) group projects . . . . . . . | .4 | 12.2 | 29.8 | 40.0 | 7.5 | 10.2 |

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The picture that emerges from these data is one of classrooms where teachers play an active and directive role while encouraging a reasonable degree of student involvement. Thus, 23.5% of teachers report that they present information while students listen or take notes every day and 24.7% also report that students express or defend opinions daily. If one shifts to a weekly basis, these figures become 48.6% and 41.2% respectively. Obviously, there is no contradiction between these figures. They simply suggest a pattern whereby teachers typically present information to students while at the same time allowing for, or encouraging, student input. In short, classrooms have retained a more or less traditional pattern of operation, as is indeed suggested by research outside Manitoba (Goodlad, 1984).

Results of the survey also show that there is considerable use of newspapers, audio-visual resources and student-based activities in Social Studies classrooms. The least used strategies are apparently the use of outside speakers, where 43.9% of teachers say they are never used; field trips; simulations; role playing; and primary source materials. This is consistent with the picture of fairly traditional classrooms that emerges from the data as a whole. There are, of course, some obvious organizational reasons for this state of affairs. Innovative methods tend to be more disruptive of established classroom routines. They can also interfere with teachers in other subjects since they cannot always be confined within the limits of a regular lesson. They require more time and effort to organize and this puts added burdens upon these teachers who are already carrying many differing responsibilities. They also require administrative support which is apparently not always forthcoming. Finally, innovative methods are not always familiar to teachers who do not have either background or training in Geography or Social Studies. In this regard it is worth remembering the data reported above on teachers' qualifications. All this said, however, there is a strong argument for including such activities in a greater number of classrooms. This would be consistent with the goals of the Social Studies curriculum and indeed with good Geography teaching generally, especially given the nature of the grade 10 program.

As is usually the case with data of this kind, there are some discrepancies between the perceptions of teachers and of students. For example, although 32.5% of teachers report that they never use field-trips, 72.6% of students make the same claim. Similarly, while 43.9% of teachers say that they never use outside speakers, 64.8% of students say that this never happens. Such differences in perceptions between teachers and students are not uncommon, especially when both groups are looking back over the course of a year or semester. It should be noted also that there is general agreement between teachers and students on the extent of student activity, group work, and discussion and related activities.

As already noted, it appears that the majority of grade 10 Geography classrooms contain a certain balance between teacher activity and student activity, though only within more or less traditional patterns, whereby the teachers play an active and directive role, with students essentially following instructions and completing assignments. More innovative and adventurous approaches which alter the role of students, such as role playing and simulation are apparently less popular. As a general rule, it can be said that teaching strategies which call for a fundamental revision of traditional classroom roles and a higher degree than usual of preparation and organization are less used than are more conventional approaches. This is, of course, not especially surprising and can be further explained by the fact that in many schools, teachers have far broader responsibilities than simply teaching Geography or Social Studies, with the result that there are many competing demands upon their time and energy. What is notable is not that more classrooms do not incorporate more innovative, student-based approaches, but that so many in fact do. The task is to find some way of increasing their number beyond those that now exist.

## EVALUATION

The Teacher Survey asked teachers to report on how they evaluated students. In terms of the four sets of goals of the Social Studies curriculum, it is clear that knowledge and skills receive the greater emphasis, while the attitudes and values and social participation objectives receive somewhat less. The social participation objectives are apparently the least emphasized but they nonetheless receive some attention from the great majority of teachers. The actual teacher responses to these items are reported below:

In formally evaluating student growth, what emphasis do you place on the following types of objectives:

| | Great Emphasis | Some Emphasis | No Emphasis | No Response |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Knowledge Objectives | 64.3% | 29.8% | .8% | 5.1% |
| 2. Thinking and Research Skills Objectives | 59.2 | 34.5 | .4 | 5.9 |
| 3. Attitudes and Values Objectives | 27.5 | 60.8 | 5.1 | 6.7 |
| 4. Social Participation Objectives | 16.1 | 66.7 | 10.2 | 7.1 |

Consistent with these data is the finding that the preferred method of evaluation for most teachers is tests and individual assignments. The following section provides the ratings given by teachers on items related to evaluation for instructional planning purposes and evaluation for grading purposes:

How important are the following for student evaluation in your Social Studies class?

| | | For Instructional Planning Purposes | | | | | For Grading Purposes | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Very Important | Important | Not Important | N/A | No Response | Very Important | Important | Not Important | N/A | No Response |
| 1. | Samples of individual student work | 27.5% | 54.5% | 5.9% | 1.2% | 11.0% | 48.6% | 36.9% | 2.0% | .4% | 12.2% |
| 2. | Samples of group projects | 10.2 | 52.9 | 14.9 | 9.4 | 12.5 | 16.5 | 51.4 | 11.4 | 8.6 | 12.2 |
| 3. | Performance in day-to-day lessons | 32.5 | 49.4 | 4.3 | 1.6 | 12.2 | 23.5 | 52.9 | 10.2 | 2.0 | 11.4 |
| 4. | Oral presentations | 5.9 | 47.8 | 23.1 | 7.8 | 15.3 | 7.5 | 45.9 | 24.3 | 9.0 | 13.3 |
| 5. | Class tests: short answer | 22.4 | 56.1 | 8.6 | 1.2 | 11.8 | 40.0 | 45.5 | 3.9 | - | 10.6 |
| 6. | Class tests: paragraph essays | 23.9 | 56.5 | 5.5 | 1.6 | 12.5 | 45.5 | 40.8 | 2.7 | .8 | 10.2 |
| 7. | Teacher-made final cumulative exam | 20.4 | 47.1 | 10.2 | 8.6 | 13.7 | 38.8 | 34.9 | 5.9 | 7.1 | 13.3 |
| 8. | School-wide cumulative exam | 7.5 | 19.2 | 11.8 | 48.2 | 13.3 | 13.7 | 13.3 | 10.6 | 51.0 | 11.4 |
| 9. | Division/ district-wide cumulative exams | 2.7 | 5.9 | 14.9 | 63.5 | 12.9 | 2.4 | 5.5 | 13.7 | 66.7 | 11.8 |
| 10. | Self-evaluation by students | 3.5 | 32.9 | 25.9 | 24.3 | 13.3 | 2.0 | 27.8 | 31.0 | 28.6 | 10.6 |
| 11. | Role playing, simulation, debates | 3.9 | 32.5 | 25.1 | 24.3 | 14.1 | 3.1 | 31.4 | 28.2 | 25.1 | 12.2 |
| 12. | Other (specify) | 2.0 | .8 | .4 | .4 | 96.5 | 2.4 | 1.6 | - | - | 96.1 |

It is clear that individual student work, tests (both short and long answer) and examinations form the basis of grading. There is little use of student self-evaluation, of role playing, debates and so on for grading purposes. A small minority of schools apparently have school-wide or division-wide examinations, but there is a much greater use of cumulative examinations designed by teachers. There were some written comments by teachers to the effect that they would appreciate advice and support on alternative methods of evaluation, for example, group work, debates, oral presentations, opinion-type activities and so on.

The data on evaluation support the data on teaching strategies, portraying as they do classrooms which are by and large following traditional patterns, with a reasonable variety of activities and an acceptable balance between teacher and student-centred work, but which do not make too much use of innovative alternatives. Such alternatives deserve to

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be encouraged, not to replace but to supplement more conventional methods. Attainment of the social participation goals of the curriculum, for example, depends to a large extent upon students becoming involved in community projects and other forms of social action, such as working with senior citizens or younger children, dealing with environmental issues, or engaging in some form of community improvement. All such activities can and should be evaluated and would form an invaluable part of a student's education.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Forty percent (40%) of the teachers surveyed reported that they had attended three or more Social Studies inservices in the last two years; 27% had attended two, and 15.7% had attended one, with 12.5% attending none at all. Since it is probable that the S.A.G. conferences were included as inservice sessions, this suggests that Social Studies are not a major theme for inservice activity. This is especially regrettable in the case of teachers who are assigned to teach Social Studies without an appropriate academic and professional background.

The following items, and their respective response rates, give the relative priority that teachers assign to differing sources of help and advice:

How important are each of the following as sources of ideas and information for your teaching of Social Studies?

| | | Very Important | Important | Not Important | Not Applicable | No Response |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Colleagues? . . . . . . . . . . | 31.4% | 51.8% | 8.2% | 3.9% | 4.7% |
| 2. | Department Heads? . . . . . . | 12.9 | 22.0 | 17.3 | 40.4 | 7.5 |
| 3. | School Administration? . . . . | 5.1 | 23.9 | 50.6 | 13.7 | 6.7 |
| 4. | Superintendent? . . . . . . . . | 1.2 | 12.5 | 51.4 | 27.8 | 7.1 |
| 5. | School Division Consultants? . | 2.0 | 15.3 | 35.3 | 40.8 | 6.7 |
| 6. | M.T.S. (MSSTA,SAG)? . . . . . | 7.5 | 50.6 | 26.3 | 8.6 | 7.1 |
| 7. | Department of Education | | | | | |
| | a) Consultants? . . . . . . | 5.5 | 32.2 | 35.7 | 17.3 | 9.4 |
| | b) Small Schools Conference? | 5.5 | 22.0 | 21.2 | 41.2 | 10.2 |
| 8. | Faculty of Education | | | | | |
| | a) Courses? . . . . . . . . . | 3.1 | 30.2 | 32.5 | 25.1 | 9.0 |
| | b) Inservice? . . . . . . . . | 5.5 | 28.2 | 32.9 | 23.5 | 9.8 |
| 9. | Methodology Texts? . . . . . . | 3.9 | 34.5 | 32.2 | 18.0 | 11.4 |
| 10. | History and Social Science Teacher (journal) . . | 4.3 | 30.2 | 30.2 | 24.3 | 11.0 |
| 11. | Manitoba Social Science Teachers Assoc. Journal? . . . | 4.7 | 31.0 | 31.4 | 22.4 | 10.6 |

It will be seen that teachers see their colleagues as their most valuable source of ideas and information, followed by the Teachers Society, although it is probable that teacher responses in this case refer primarily to the S.A.G. conference. Slightly more than one-third of teachers rate as important or very important the help of Manitoba Education and Training, the Faculties of Education, methodology texts, and professional journals. Eighty-six comments were made by teachers bearing on inservice needs. For the most part they urged that there should be more inservice sessions which allow teachers to share and exchange ideas and which deal with teaching strategies and materials. As research and experience elsewhere suggest, teachers prefer inservice sessions of a practical nature which deal with matters that are relevant to the classroom.

It should be noted that over 50% of teachers report that school administrators and superintendents are not important or "not applicable" as sources of ideas and information. This seems regrettable in view of the importance of school administrators as agents of change and as instructional leaders. Administrators play a crucial role in establishing the climate within which successful teaching takes place and it is disappointing that more teachers do not report that they see their administrators as useful sources of ideas and information. It is to be noted also that almost 60% of teachers rate Manitoba Education and Training, the Faculties of Education, and relevant professional journals as either unimportant or not applicable to their work. In making this judgment, many teachers have presumably ignored the central role of Manitoba Education and Training in preparing curricula, producing teachers' guides, approving textbooks, and so on. No doubt, as they acquire experience and become further removed from their university training, teachers also turn less to the universities for advice and assistance. Nonetheless, the universities and the departmental officials contain a rich source of expertise and it is to be regretted that teachers do not make more use of them. There is, it would seem, a role here for them, especially if they address the practical needs and concerns of teachers. An appropriate forum could well be the Manitoba Social Science Teachers Association. The Association is already making some moves in this direction and is linked with both Manitoba Education and Training and the universities. It would be helpful if these efforts were given more support by all concerned.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on the results of the grade 10 teacher survey.

1. **School administrators should make every effort to appoint teachers of Social Studies who have adequate and appropriate academic and professional Social Studies education and training.**

2. School divisions should ensure that inservice education is provided for teachers who are appointed to teach Social Studies without appropriate academic and professional backgrounds and such teachers should be encouraged and supported in engaging in such inservice work.

3. Manitoba Education and Training, the universities, and the appropriate professional organizations should cooperate to provide support for Social Studies teachers who lack appropriate academic and professional background in their subject.

4. School administrators and the appropriate professional organizations should make provision for the greater involvement of teachers in the planning and development of Social Studies inservices.

5. Manitoba Education and Training, the appropriate professional organizations, and the universities should develop programs and activities to assist those teachers who do not currently make use of their services.

6. Administration and teachers responsible for inservice activities should ensure that sufficient attention is paid to Social Studies.

7. Teachers should be encouraged and helped to increase the extent to which they use teaching methods which involve students more actively in their learning.

8. Teachers should be encouraged and helped to include social participation goals and activities in their evaluation of students' performance.

9. Manitoba Education and Training should commission a research project into the amount of time actually allocated to Social Studies in schools, with a view to ascertaining to what extent the recommended allocation of 110-120 hours of instruction per year is actually achieved.

10. Manitoba Education and Training should foster joint projects with other bodies, for example museums, the Provincial Archives, Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Recreation, the Manitoba Social Science Teachers Association, and other appropriate groups, for the purpose of increasing the available support to Social Studies teachers.

11. Manitoba Education and Training should make every effort to support the work of Social Studies teachers in all areas of the province, but especially those outside of Winnipeg.

# CHAPTER 11

# Comparison of 1984 and 1989 Results

The 1989 Social Studies Assessment included a comparison testing component directed at determining whether or not there was any change in the achievement of curricular objectives or in the level of curriculum implementation from 1984 to 1989. This comparison was carried out by a readministration of the knowledge and thinking and research skills sections of the written tests that were used for the 1984 Social Studies assessment in grades 3, 6, 9, and 12.

As will be seen in the results reported below, no significant differences were found between performance in 1984 and that in 1989. There were slight variations, but they can be explained by chance and circumstance. In the statistical sense, the differences were not significant. The overall results are presented in Table 11.1 and Table 11.2 below.

Table 11.1

Knowledge Subtest
Comparison of Means 1984 and 1989

| Grade Level | 1984 Means | 1989 Means | Statistical Significance |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 15.547 | 16.14 | none |
| 6 | 18.847 | 19.029 | none |
| 9 | 26.784 | 27.327 | none |
| 12 | 22.282 | 20.077 | none |

Table 11.2

Thinking and Research Skills Subtest
Comparison of Means 1984 and 1989

| Grade Level | 1984 Means | 1989 Means | Statistical Significance |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 21.234 | 21.076 | none |
| 6 | 22.495 | 22.095 | none |
| 9 | 17.172 | 16.457 | none |
| 12 | 20.371 | 18.999 | none |

## GRADE 3 RESULTS

Items assessing the achievement of knowledge and thinking and research skills objectives were divided into subtests as outlined in Tables 11.3 and 11.4 which summarize student performance on the knowledge and thinking and research skills components of the grade 3 test in 1984 and 1989.

Table 11.3

Comparison of Grade 3 Students' Knowledge Performance: 1984 and 1989

| Subtest | Knowledge Items | 1984 Means | Interpretation Panel Ratings* (1984 Results) | 1989 Means | Statistical Significance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Community Situation | 1,2 | 1.721 | Strength | 1.788 | none |
| Meeting Needs and Wants | 3,4,14, 15,17-22 | 7.873 | Very Satisfactory | 8.046 | none |
| Cooperation and Conflict | 5,6,7 | 2.395 | Very Satisfactory | 2.463 | none |
| General Information | 8-13 | 3.558 | Marginal | 3.875 | none |

* The 1984 Interpretation Panel ratings were based on a 5-point scale: Strength, Very Satisfactory, Satisfactory, Marginal, and Unsatisfactory. A description of the Interpretation Panel rating procedure can be found on page 15 of Chapter II in the 1984 Final Report.

Table 11.4

Comparison of Grade 3 Students' Thinking and Research Skills Performance: 1984 and 1989

| Subtest | Thinking and Research Skills Items | 1984 Results | Interpretation Panel Ratings* (1984 Results) | 1989 Results | Statistical Significance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Community History | 38,43,44 | 1.839 | Unsatisfactory | 1.767 | none |
| Meeting Needs and Wants | 39,40,45 | 2.528 | Very Satisfactory | 2.49 | none |
| Comparing Communities | 41,42 | 1.673 | Very Satisfactory | 1.64 | none |
| Other Skills: Graphs, Pictures, Maps | 46-65 | 15.194 | Satisfactory | 15.179 | none |

* The 1984 Interpretation Panel ratings were based on a 5-point scale: Strength, Very Satisfactory, Satisfactory, Marginal, and Unsatisfactory. A description of the Interpretation Panel rating procedure can be found on page 15 of Chapter II in the 1984 Final Report.

As indicated in Tables 11.3 and 11.4, there were no statistically significant changes in grade 3 student performance in either the knowledge or the thinking and research skills subtests from 1984 to 1989.

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## GRADE 6 RESULTS

Items assessing achievement on knowledge and thinking and research skills objectives were divided into categories. Tables 11.5 and 11.6 report the student performance by category on the knowledge and the thinking and research skills components of the grade 6 test in 1984 and 1989.

### Table 11.5

Comparison of Grade 6 Students' Knowledge Performance: 1984 and 1989

| Subtest | Knowledge Items | 1984 Results | Interpretation Panel Ratings* (1984 Results) | 1989 Results | Statistical Significance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| First Inhabitants, Exploration and Early Settlement | 1-11 | 5.321 | Unsatisfactory | 5.558 | none |
| Loyalists | 12-14 | 1.168 | Unsatisfactory/ Marginal | 1.207 | none |
| Red River | 15-20 | 2.995 | Marginal | 2.866 | none |
| Confederation | 21-23 | 1.439 | Unsatisfactory | 1.549 | none |
| 19th Century Western Canada | 24-33 | 4.733 | Marginal/ Satisfactory | 4.572 | none |
| 20th Century Canada | 34-40 | 3.191 | Satisfactory | 3.277 | none |

*** The 1984 Interpretation Panel ratings were based on a 5-point scale: Strength, Very Satisfactory, Satisfactory, Marginal, and Unsatisfactory. A description of the Interpretation Panel rating procedure can be found on page 15 of Chapter II in the 1984 Final Report. The dual ratings on some subtests indicates a range of responses on items within the subtest.**

### Table 11.6

Comparison of Grade 6 Students' Thinking and Research Skills Performance: 1984 and 1989

| Subtest | Thinking and Research Skills Items | 1984 Results | Interpretation Panel Ratings* (1984 Results) | 1989 Results | Statistical Significance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Locating Information | 101-108 | 5.368 | Very Satisfactory | 5.361 | none |
| Acquiring Information | 109-113,117,118, 120,121,123,128-132 | 10.354 | Very Satisfactory | 10.19 | none |
| Organizing/Interpreting Information | 119,122,124-127, 133,138 | 5.131 | Very Satisfactory | 4.923 | none |
| Evaluating Information | 114-116 | 1.642 | Satisfactory | 1.62 | none |

*** The 1984 Interpretation Panel ratings were based on a 5-point scale: Strength, Very Satisfactory, Satisfactory, Marginal, and Unsatisfactory. A description of the Interpretation Panel rating procedure can be found on page 15 of Chapter II in the 1984 Final Report.**

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As indicated in Tables 11.5 and 11.6, there were no statistically significant changes in grade 6 student performance in either the knowledge or the thinking and research skills subtests from 1984 to 1989.

## GRADE 9 RESULTS

Items assessing the achievement of knowledge and thinking and research skills objectives were divided into subtests for the 1989 comparison test, as presented in Table 11.7 and 11.8 below.

The data reported here concern the knowledge and the thinking and research skills components of the grade 9 program. So far as knowledge is concerned, the subtests were congruent with the units of the program, covering Canada's Physical Environment, Canadian Identity, Canadian Society, and Canada and the World. The comparative results are reported in Table 11.7.

**Table 11.7**

Comparison of Grade 9 Students' Knowledge Performance: 1984 and 1989

| Subtest | Knowledge Items | 1984 Results | Interpretation Panel Ratings* (1984 Results) | 1989 Results | Statistical Significance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Canada's Physical Environment | 35-44 | 5.61 | Marginal | 5.62 | none |
| Canadian Identity | 45-51,74 | 3.596 | Satisfactory | 4.04 | none |
| Canadian Society | 53-55,57-73, 75-80,86 | 12.622 | Marginal with 1 ''very satisfactory component'' | 12.359 | none |
| Canada and the World | 52,56,81-85 | 3.667 | Satisfactory with 1 ''very satisfactory component'' | 3.765 | none |
| General Social Studies Skills | 111-113 | 1.29 | N/A | 1.543 | none |

* **The 1984 Interpretation Panel ratings were based on a 5-point scale: Strength, Very Satisfactory, Satisfactory, Marginal, and Unsatisfactory. A description of the Interpretation Panel rating procedure can be found on page 15 of Chapter II in the 1984 Final Report.**

If consolation can be found in the fact that students' mean response rate has not deteriorated since 1984, it must be a cause of concern that it has not improved, especially in those subtests where results were rated as marginal. Ideally, one might have hoped to see even the satisfactory ratings improve over a five-year period, but such apparently is not the case. It might be that the recommendations contained in the 1984 Assessment Report were of too general a nature, or were not especially helpful in addressing the problems that then existed. When one reads such recommendations as *"advantage should* *be taken of all opportunities to teach skills across the curriculum"*, for example, it is not clear to whom they should be specifically addressed for effective implementation. Indeed, given the lack of attention to Social Studies inservice work reported in the 1989 Assessment, it is not at all clear that a mechanism for pursuing such recommendations exists.

As with their performance on the knowledge subtests, students' performance on thinking and research skills revealed no significant differences over time even though the mean of each subtest is slightly lower in 1989 than in 1984. The data are reported in Table 11.8.

### Table 11.8

Comparison of Grade 9 Students' Thinking and Research Skills Performance:
1984 and 1989

| Subtest | Thinking and Research Skills Items | 1984 Results | Interpretation Panel Ratings* (1984 Results) | 1989 Results | Statistical Significance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Canada's Physical Environment | 115 | 0.673 | Very Satisfactory | 0.659 | none |
| Canadian Society | 87-89,96-98,110, 116-121 | 6.511 | Satisfactory | 6.233 | none |
| Canada and the World | 90-94 | 2.997 | Satisfactory | 2.893 | none |
| General Social Studies Skills | 95,99-109,114 | 6.99 | Satisfactory | 6.671 | none |

*** The 1984 Interpretation Panel ratings were based on a 5-point scale: Strength, Very Satisfactory, Satisfactory, Marginal, and Unsatisfactory. A description of the Interpretation Panel rating procedure can be found on page 15 of Chapter II in the 1984 Final Report.**

It should be remembered that the interpretations in 1984 were arrived at in the context of judgments of the level of difficulty of the questions and the problems they caused for students. Thus, for example, the very satisfactory rating for Canada's Physical Environment was based upon a mean correct response rate of .673; or in the case of Canadian Identity (Table 11.7), on a mean response rate of 3.596. This makes the consistency of student performance between 1984 and 1989 all the more disturbing. The results obtained in 1984 were satisfactory overall, but they gave no cause for rejoicing. We have not, it seems, been able to improve them since then. As noted above, it is difficult to know how to interpret this, but it is something that merits serious investigation.

## GRADE 12 RESULTS

The grade 12 test was designed to examine general social studies skills as opposed to curricular specific objectives since social studies is optional at the grade 12 level in Manitoba schools. Thus the students who formed part of the Assessment were not necessarily enrolled in a social studies program, though, of course, they would have taken social studies up to the end of grade 11. The grade 12 knowledge results present a more consistent picture than the results for grades 3, 6, and 9. Some slight decline in overall performance is observed but, with one exception, not to the extent that it becomes statistically significant. Items assessing the achievement of knowledge objectives were divided into subtests for the 1989 comparison and are presented in Table 11.9.

Table 11.9

Comparison of Grade 12 Students' Knowledge Performance: 1984 and 1989

| Subtest | Knowledge Items | 1984 Results | Interpretation Panel Ratings* (1984 Results) | 1989 Results | Statistical Significance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| History and Politics | 141-156 | 7.353 | marginal/ unsatisfactory | 5.952 | Significant |
| Canada and World Issues | 157-169 | 5.833 | satisfactory/ unsatisfactory | 5.476 | none |
| Mapwork | 170-183 | 7.135 | marginal/ unsatisfactory | 7.001 | none |
| Economic and Social Change | 184-188 | 1.96 | marginal/ unsatisfactory | 1.647 | none |

* The 1984 Interpretation Panel ratings were based on a 5-point scale: Strength, Very Satisfactory, Satisfactory, Marginal, and Unsatisfactory. A description of the Interpretation Panel rating procedure can be found on page 15 of Chapter II in the 1984 Final Report.
The first judgement on each line applies to 300/305 students; the second to 301/304 students. Thus, on the History and Politics subtest, 300/305 students were rated as ''marginal'' while 301/304 students were rated as ''unsatisfactory''.

In 1984 the Interpretation Panel rated the 1984 results as marginal or unsatisfactory in all cases except the subtest on Canada and World Issues written by English 300/305 students. Little, it seems, has changed, though the decline in the History and Politics subtest is noticeable, though no explanation can be obtained from the data. Since the questions largely dealt with the mechanics of government and the political process, and with Canadian history, it is difficult to understand why students did less well. Indeed, one would have hoped that the changes in the Social Studies curriculum generally in the 1980's would have made students better informed by grade 12.

Items assessing the achievement of thinking and research skills objectives were divided into subtests for the 1989 comparison and are presented in Table 11.10.

### Table 11.10

Comparison of Grade 12 Students' Thinking and Research Skills Performance: 1984 and 1989

| Subtest | Thinking and Research Skills Items | 1984 Results | Interpretation Panel Ratings* (1984 Results) | 1989 Results | Statistical Significance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| History and Politics | 101-107 | 4.354 | satisfactory/ satisfactory | 4.272 | none |
| Canada and World Issues | 108-117 | 5.953 | satisfactory/ satisfactory | 5.643 | none |
| Mapwork | 118-134 | 6.613 | marginal/ unsatisfactory | 6.051 | none |
| Economic and Social Change | 135-140 | 3.503 | strength/ satisfactory | 3.036 | none |

* The 1984 Interpretation Panel ratings were based on a 5-point scale: Strength, Very Satisfactory, Satisfactory, Marginal, and Unsatisfactory. A description of the Interpretation Panel rating procedure can be found on page 15 of Chapter II in the 1984 Final Report.

The first judgement on each line applies to 300/305 students; the second to 301/304 students. Thus, on the History and Politics subtest, 300/305 students were rated as ''satisfactory'' and 301/304 students were rated as ''satisfactory''.

As in the case of the knowledge subtest, the results show a slight decline in the means but not to the point of becoming statistically significant. In 1984 the Interpretation Panel rated the 1984 results as either a strength or satisfactory, except in the case of mapwork, which was rated as marginal to unsatisfactory. These ratings presumably can be applied to the 1989 data also. As in grade 9, little change has occurred.

## OBSERVATIONS AND DISCUSSION

In all four grade levels, the same pattern appears - marginal differences in the means but nothing of statistical significance. Despite five years of experience with the Social Studies curriculum, and despite the recommendations of the 1984 Assessment Report, nothing has changed.

It is difficult to know what to make of this. It is a cause for some surprise that the 1989 results were not better than they were. The curriculum and the textbooks had been in place for some five years; in the case of grade 9, a provincially-designated teachers' guide was available; the assessment itself was no longer a novelty; inservice activities had taken place, especially around the implementation of the new curriculum; and the teacher education institutions had based their teacher-preparation activities

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specifically on the new provincial curriculum. Despite all this, however, student performance did not change to any significant degree. It is difficult to explain this, short of concluding that there is some systemic or structural problem in the organization and delivery of the curriculum, or in the teacher education and professional development system, or in the conduct of teaching, that needs to be addressed. It is not clear to what extent the various recommendations contained in the 1984 Final Report were in fact helpful, or effectively implemented in all instances, and it might be that herein lies part of the problem.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

As indicated in the tables in this chapter, there were, with one exception, no statistically significant changes in grade 3, 6, 9, and 12 student performances in either the knowledge or the thinking and research skills subtests from 1984 to 1989. This suggests that:

1. **Manitoba Education and Training, through the Social Studies Committee, should review the recommendations made in Chapter I of the Manitoba Social Studies Assessment 1984, Final Report and carry out such curriculum revision and implementation actions as are appropriate.**

# CHAPTER 12

## Assessment Summary Comments

An examination of the data obtained at all three grade levels of the 1989 Assessment reveals a remarkably consistent picture. At all three grade levels teachers report themselves as satisfied with the curriculum guides and, to a lesser extent, with the textbooks, though in grade 4 they report major concerns about the availability and usefulness of supplementary resources. Since the 1984 assessment, the Social Studies curriculum has gained acceptance with teachers, who report that they are using the particular grade level guides and find their format helpful. Teachers also describe themselves as satisfied with what they are teaching. The vast majority of teachers in grades 8 and 10, for example, report that they would teach the Social Studies course again, if given the choice. They report that they are in large measure in control of such basic aspects of classroom life as the selection of teaching strategies, of student evaluation and of supplementary materials. By contrast, and for obvious reasons, they report that they have little control over the allocation of time to the Social Studies program and over the selection of textbooks. By and large, however, it appears that Social Studies teachers feel comfortable with their work: they accept the curriculum and find the curriculum guides helpful; they feel qualified to teach the program; and, if given a choice, they would in fact choose to teach it.

At the same time, there are some concerns, some reported by teachers themselves and others which are to be found in the data. The vast majority of teachers in all three grade levels report that they feel unduly pressed for time and that the time allotments provided for specific units in the curriculum guides are not realistic. The general pattern that emerges is one in which teachers spend much time on the opening units of a particular program and then gradually run out of time as the year progresses. This fact suggests that the problem may not necessarily lie in the curriculum guides, but rather in the way that they are approached. It is at least possible that not enough attention is being paid to the curriculum guides for the purpose of instructional planning. The guides are fairly explicit about what is expected in each unit: they lay out objectives and focusing questions; they outline the appropriate content; and generally explain what each unit is expected to accomplish. However, if teachers in fact rely on the textbook, rather than the curriculum guide, when it comes to the details of instructional planning for a particular unit, one can see why time would quickly become a problem. The grade 4 data, for example, suggest that teachers do not necessarily follow the curriculum guide in detail. Whatever the case, whether the source of the problem is to be found in the expectations of the curriculum guides, or in approaches to instructional planning, or at the high school level in the consequences of the semester system, there is obviously a problem here. The reality is that, at all three grade levels, the later sections of the curriculum are not receiving adequate coverage.

The problem is to a certain extent compounded by the finding that, at all three grade levels, the time allocations stipulated by Manitoba Education and Training are not always applied to the Social Studies curriculum. There appears to be a wide variety of time allocations, and in a number of cases, these allocations fall below provincial requirements.

There is some concern also regarding the training of Social Studies teachers. Even in the high school, it appears that approximately one-half of the teachers of grade 10 Social Studies have only minimal academic and professional training in their subject. It is true that the great majority of teachers report that they feel qualified to teach the subject. It is also true that academic qualifications alone do not necessarily make a good teacher. Nonetheless, it seems reasonable to believe that teachers who lack adequate background in a subject, no matter what their pedagogical expertise, might not be able to do justice to the subject by taking advantage of its potential for interest and excitement.

This issue of background and preparation is linked to the question of inservice training. The 1989 Assessment shows clearly that the majority of teachers have had little recent inservice training in Social Studies. Indeed, the data suggest that Social Studies has not been a high priority in the design and provision of inservice training. Despite this, many teachers provided written comments which indicated that such inservice would be of value to them, especially if it provided opportunities for sharing ideas, resources and experiences with colleagues, and if it was focused upon the exploration of classroom materials.

The 1989 Assessment provided some useful data on teaching strategies, through the eyes of both teachers and students. By and large, the findings were generally consistent with those that have been presented in jurisdictions outside Manitoba, with the important exception that in Manitoba classrooms there appears to be somewhat more student activity than is reported elsewhere. In any event, discussion, group work, and projects are not unfamiliar in Manitoba Social Studies classrooms. The finds of the Assessment suggest that classrooms are characterized by a high degree of teacher control, with teachers providing information, lecturing, presenting notes and so forth, while at the same time allowing for student input and activity. Methods which represent a substantial departure from this norm are much less common. At all three grade levels, field trips, simulation, role-playing, and visiting speakers are the exception. There are, of course, obvious reasons for this: such methods can disrupt the normal functioning of other classes; they demand preparation time which hard-pressed teachers may not have; they are not necessarily welcomed and supported by administrators. All this said, however, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that a powerful opportunity for enriching Social Studies education is being lost. In the same vein, the social participation objectives of the curriculum are apparently still not universally accepted. Most students are not involved in projects and activities that demonstrate the social or political relevance of what they are learning. The assessment findings suggest that a fair amount is being done to connect Social Studies education with current events, and teachers are to be commended for this. It remains now to make this connection one stage further and to engage students more directly with current events by pursuing the social participation objectives of the curriculum.

Teachers generally report that they see the knowledge and skills objectives of the curriculum as being of particular importance, though they do not neglect the other objectives of the curriculum. In this regard, it appears that more attention is being paid to the importance of skills than was the case a few years ago. Perhaps the greatest area of concern so far as skills are concerned is to be found in students' ability to write sustained prose. In both grade 8 and grade 10, for example, it was found that more students had difficulty expressing their ideas in written form than had been expected. There is obviously a case here for exploring ways of organizing Social Studies teaching so that it provides ample opportunity for the improvement of students' writing skills.

Perhaps the most striking finding so far as knowledge objectives are concerned was the lack of consistency in what students did and did not know. In some cases, knowledge items were answered satisfactorily by a large majority of students; in others, surprising gaps appeared. The 1984 Assessment noted that "statements of objectives need to be more precise so that teachers and students understand clearly what is expected of them in any given unit." Since those words were written in 1984, curriculum guides have in fact been made more explicit, especially with the inclusion of focusing questions and of outlines of content. There is no reason why the curriculum guide should be packed full of dates, names, definitions, and the rest, nor should the curriculum become so rigid and so specific that it denies teachers the flexibility they need to match it to their particular students. At the same time, there is reason to wonder whether instructional planning gives enough attention to the identification of the essential facts, terms, and concepts to be taught in any given unit and whether they are made sufficiently clear to students and cumulatively reinforced as teaching and learning proceed throughout the year. As important as skills are, they should not be pursued at the expense of fundamental knowledge. Rather, knowledge and skills development should go hand in hand. In both the 1984 and 1989 Assessments, teachers reported that they saw the development of decision-making skills and of personal autonomy as the primary goals of Social Studies, with the transmission of cultural heritage coming some way behind. More specifically, between 80% and 90% of teachers emphasized the former, with approximately 60% emphasizing the latter. There is perhaps a suggestion here that skills are being pursued at the expense of fundamental knowledge, or possibly that knowledge is seen as relative and instrumental to the development of skills. It is certainly true that we need to teach students how to learn, but at the same time, we cannot afford to ignore what it is that students are learning. It has become fashionable to say that "process" is more important than "product", but the truth is that one cannot exist without the other. In the Social Studies, we need to pay particular attention to the task of defining what knowledge is essential for students.

It must always be remembered that the Assessment is intended primarily to be an evaluation of the curriculum and how well it is working. The findings of the 1989 Assessment suggest that the curriculum has been well received by teachers, both in its general outline and in its specific format, although some further clarification would be useful, especially in the case of grade 4. The process of curriculum development and dissemination has been completed. What remains to be done is to see that the curriculum is now fully reflected in the mechanisms of instructional planning at the classroom level. This is a task for teacher education, for professional development, for inservice work, and for materials development. If these tasks can be pursued by all those concerned - teachers, universities, and Manitoba Education and Training - the Social Studies curriculum, and the province's students, will be the beneficiaries.

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# APPENDIX A

## Teacher Surveys, Grades 4, 8 and 10

### SOCIAL STUDIES ASSESSMENT PROGRAM 1989

### TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

### Grade 4

**This confidential questionnaire is designed to provide a description of the Social Studies program in your school. Please answer as a Social Studies teacher for grade four.**

**Place an "X" on the line under your choice.**

**I. TEACHER BACKGROUND**

How many (academic or professional) college courses have you taken in each of the following disciplines? (Count 3 credits as one course and include both undergraduate and graduate courses.)

| | **Number of 3-Credit Courses** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 or more |
| A. History . . . . . . . . . . . . . | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| B. Geography . . . . . . . . . . . | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| C. Other Social Sciences . . . . . | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |

**II. SCHOOL ORGANIZATION**

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Other (specify) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A. How many days are in one cycle of your timetable?. . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |

| | Less than 61 | 61-90 | 91-120 | 121-150 | 151-180 | Over 180 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| B. How many minutes per cycle (per class) do you teach Social Studies? | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |

**III. VIEWS OF SOCIAL STUDIES**

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A. The main task of Social Studies is to preserve and transmit cultural heritage . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| B. Social Studies should teach students to make rational decisions about personal and social issues. . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| C. Social Studies should provide learners both with an awareness of possible futures and the roles they might play in developing these futures . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| D. Social Studies should provide students with the skills necessary to become independent learners. . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| E. Social Studies should teach a body of tested principles and generalizations about human relations and societies. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| F. Social Studies should help students understand the structure of the social sciences . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |

---

**IV. CURRICULUM GUIDE**

| | YES | NO | NOT SURE |
|---|---|---|---|
| A. Are you using the 1982 Social Studies Curriculum Guide? . . . . . | ___ | ___ | |
| B. Have you attended inservice sessions on the grade 4 curriculum? . | ___ | ___ | |
| C. Were Social Studies curriculum inservices available to you which you did not attend?. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ |

Please comment: ______________________________________________

______________________________________________

D. How would you rate the 1982 Social Studies curriculum guide on:

| | Very Satisfactory | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | No Opinion |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Social Studies K-12 Guide (Overview)? . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 2. Grade Four Overview?. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 3. Unit Overview?. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 4. Topics and Focusing Questions?. . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 5. Knowledge Objectives? . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 6. Thinking and Research Skills Objectives?. . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 7. Attitude & Value Objectives?. . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 8. Social Participation Objectives?. . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 9. Suggested Teaching Strategies and Learning Activities? | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 10. Suggested Learning Resources? . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 11. Suggested Strategies for Evaluation of Students? | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 12. How would you rate the grade four curriculum overall? | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |

**V. SELECTION OF UNIT TOPICS**

A. The grade four curriculum emphasizes the study of world communities.

1. Do you teach the curriculum primarily as **(answer one only)**

a) a study of specific communities? ☐ **OR**

b) a study of countries? ☐ **OR**

c) both a) and b)? ☐

B. Some reasons for selecting communities or countries to study in Grade Four are listed below:

1. They are in the text in use.
2. The teacher has personal experience with the communities or countries.
3. They are currently in the news.
4. They are the communities or countries from which the students or their families came to Canada.
5. There are many good teaching resources available for the communities or countries selected.
6. They represent a variety of physical areas around the world.
7. They illustrate key global issues such as hunger, pollution, etc.
8. They are generated from student interest.
9. If you have other reasons for selection, please specify.______________

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Please list each community and its country that you taught to the whole class and give your reason(s) for selection. If you taught from a country point of view, list the country(ies) and your reason(s) for selection.

| Community | Country | Reasons (List the number(s) above.) |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

C. Did your students have an opportunity to select communities of interest to them for individual or small group study?

☐ Yes If yes, how many? ☐

☐ No

D. Should any of the following world issues be taught within the context of the grade four program?

| | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| 1. world hunger | ☐ | ☐ |
| 2. conservation | ☐ | ☐ |
| 3. world peace | ☐ | ☐ |
| 4. pollution (acid rain, damage to ozone layer, greenhouse effect, etc.) | ☐ | ☐ |
| 5. other (please specify) ______________________ | ☐ | ☐ |

E. Are current world events part of your program? e.g., Olympics, scientific discoveries, famines, natural disasters such as hurricanes, earthquakes, etc.

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please specify. ______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

F. Do you prefer to teach map skills **(Answer one only)**

☐ 1. throughout the year?

☐ 2. in a unit at the beginning of the year?

☐ 3. both 1 & 2?

G. Do you prefer to teach students research skills **(Answer one only)**

☐ 1. prior to the unit?

☐ 2. during the unit as they are needed?

☐ 3. both 1 & 2?

H. How important is it that bias and stereotyping be dealt with in teaching the grade four program?

☐ **Very Important** ☐ **Important** ☐ **Unimportant**

What is the most effective way you have found to deal with this?

______________________________

______________________________

I. One of the major aims of the program is to help children develop a sense of empathy and responsibility for people in other parts of the world.

1. How important a goal is this for grade four children?

☐ **Very Important** ☐ **Important** ☐ **Unimportant**

2. What is the most effective way you have found to deal with this?

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

## VI. TEACHING RESOURCES

A. Do you use a text? ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**

B. Rate the following texts if used, or indicate that you do not use them.

| | Very Satisfactory | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Not Used |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Communities Around Our World, (Massey) Ginn & Co. | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 2. The Global Village - The World of People, (Ashton, Anderson) McGraw-Hill Ryerson | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 3. People Call It Home, (Huxley) Oxford | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 4. World Ways, (Jill Fenton) Globe Modern | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 5. Other (specify)______________ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |

C. Where do you locate resources which are current, appropriate to grade level and useable? Check **ALL** that apply.

☐ 1. personal resources
☐ 2. your school
☐ 3. your community
☐ 4. resource centres
☐ 5. workshops, inservices, conferences
☐ 6. embassies, consulates
☐ 7. current magazines, newspapers

8. International Development Agencies
  ☐ IDEA Centre
  ☐ Red Cross
  ☐ UNICEF (United Nations)
  ☐ Marquis Project
  ☐ Other ______________________________

9. Department of Education and Training
  ☐ a) Education Manitoba publication
  ☐ b) Manitoba Text Book catalogue
  ☐ c) Library Audio/Video Dubbing
  ☐ d) Library - films, tapes
  ☐ e) Library - print materials/kits
  ☐ f) Multicultural Education Resource Centre

## VII. TEACHING STRATEGIES

How often does each of the following happen in your Social Studies program?

| | Daily | Weekly | Monthly | A Few Times a Year | Never |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Teacher presents information in class periods while children listen. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 2. Students research topics of interest to them . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 3. Teacher uses audio visual resources in class (e.g., films, filmstrips, T.V.) . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 4. Students participate in field trips, e.g., museums, businesses, etc. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 5. Teacher uses integrated approach in Social Studies unit . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 6. Students are encouraged to write to pen pals in other communities and exchange information with them . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |

VII. TEACHING STRATEGIES (Cont'd.)

| | Daily | Weekly | Monthly | A Few Times a Year | Never |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7. Teacher invites people from other communities to speak to students. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 8. Teacher brings in artifacts such as food, clothing, music, art into classroom. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 9. Students express their learning in art forms, writing, dramas, movement, etc . . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 10. Students take imaginary trips to other world communities. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 11. Teacher and students develop bulletin boards of current events . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 12. Teacher makes use of student contributions such as books, newspaper clippings, artifacts, etc . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |

## VIII. EVALUATION

A. In formally evaluating student growth, what emphasis do you place on the following types of objectives:

| | Great Emphasis | Some Emphasis | No Emphasis |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Knowledge Objectives . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 2. Research and Thinking Skills Objectives. | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 3. Attitudes and Values Objectives. . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 4. Social Participation Objectives. . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ |

B. How important are the following for student evaluation in your Social Studies program?

| | For Instructional Planning Purposes | | | | For Grading Purposes | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Very Important | Important | Not Important | N/A | Very Important | Important | Not Important | N/A |
| 1. Samples of individual student work. . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 2. Samples of group projects . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 3. Performance in day-to-day lessons . . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 4. Notebooks . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 5. Oral presentations. . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 6. Role playing, simulation,debates. | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 7. Participation in class discussions . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 8. Class tests . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 9. School-wide tests . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 10. Division/district tests . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 11. Self evaluation by students . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |

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B. What supports would you need to help you with evaluation of student progress in social studies?

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

## IX. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN SOCIAL STUDIES

1. How many social studies inservices have you attended in the last two years?

   0 1 2 3 or more

2. What are the most pressing need(s) you have for social studies inservices?

   ________________________________________

   ________________________________________

   ________________________________________

4. How important are each of the following as sources of ideas and information for your teaching of Social Studies?

| | Very Important | Important | Not Important | Not Applicable |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Colleagues? . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 2. Department Heads? . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 3. School Administration?. | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 4. Superintendent? . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 5. School division consultants? | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 6. M.T.S. (e.g., SAG, locals)?. | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 7. Small Schools Conference? | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 8. Other (please specify)? | | | | |
| ________________ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |

Thank you for your co-operation. Please return this questionnaire by **June 9, 1989** in the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope.

___ ___ ___

# SOCIAL STUDIES ASSESSMENT 1989

## TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE
## GRADE 8

**This confidential questionnaire is designed to provide a description of the Social Studies program in your school. Please answer as a Social Studies teacher for Grade 8.**

**PLEASE NOTE THAT IT IS IMPORTANT FOR THE SAKE OF RANDOMNESS THAT YOUR REPLIES REFER ONLY TO GRADE 8.**

**Place an "X" on the line under your choice.**

## I. TEACHER BACKGROUND

How many (academic or professional) college courses have you taken in each of the following disciplines? (Count 3 credits as one course and include both undergraduate and graduate courses.)

| | Number of 3-Credit Courses | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 or more |
| A. History | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| B. Geography | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| C. Other Social Sciences | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |

## II. SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

| | Non-Semestered | Semestered |
|---|---|---|
| A. Is the course you teach non-semestered or semestered? | ___ | ___ |

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Other (specify) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| B. How many days are in 1 cycle of your timetable? | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |

C. How many minutes per cycle (per class) do you teach Social Studies?

| Non-Semestered Courses | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Less Than 105 | 105-140 | 141-175 | 176-210 | 211-240 | Over 240 |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |

| Semestered Courses | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Less Than 210 | 211-280 | 281-350 | 351-420 | 421-480 | Over 480 |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |

D. To what degree are you able to influence the following decisions?

| | Great Influence | Some Influence | Little or No Influence |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Allocation of time for Social Studies | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 2. Allocation of time to specific topics | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 3. Text book choice | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 4. Selecting support material | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 5. Teaching strategies | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 6. Evaluation of student progress | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 7. Inservice activities | ___ | ___ | ___ |

E. Given your choice, would you teach this course? Yes ___ No ___

F. Do you feel qualified to teach this course? Yes ___ No ___

## III. RATIONALE FOR TEACHING SOCIAL STUDIES

There are various views on the role of Social Studies in the curriculum. Please indicate your views on each of the goal statements below.

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A. The main task of Social Studies is to preserve and transmit cultural heritage | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| B. Social Studies should teach students to make rational decisions about personal and social issues | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| C. Social Studies should provide learners both with an awareness of possible futures and the roles they might play in developing these futures | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| D. Social Studies should provide students with the skills necessary to become independent learners | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| E. Social Studies should teach a body of tested principles and generalizations about human relations and societies | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| F. Social Studies should help students understand the structure of the social sciences | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |

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## IV. CURRICULUM GUIDE

A. Are you using the 1986 Guide for Grade 8? Yes ___ No ___

B. How would you rate the 1986 Grade 8 Curriculum Guide on:

| | Very Satisfactory | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | No Opinion |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Social Studies K-12 Guide (Overview)? | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 2. Grade Eight Overview? | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 3. Unit Overview? | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 4. Topics and Focusing Questions? | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 5. Knowledge Objectives? | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 6. Thinking and Research Skills Objectives? | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 7. Attitude & Value Objectives? | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 8. Social Participation Objectives? | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 9. Suggested Teaching Strategies and Learning Activities | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 10. Suggested Learning Resources | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 11. Suggested Strategies for Evaluation of Students? | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 12. How would you rate the grade 8 Curriculum Guide overall? | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |

C. Approximately how many weeks did your class spend on each of the following units?

| | Semestered (No. of weeks) | Non-Semestered (No. of weeks) |
|---|---|---|
| People through the Ages (Overview). . . . . . . | ___ | ___ |
| Unit I - Life During Prehistoric and Early Historic Times. . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ |
| Unit II - Ancient Civilizations . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ |
| Unit III - Life in Early Modern Europe . . . . | ___ | ___ |
| Unit IV - Life in the Modern World. . . . . . | ___ | ___ |

What comments would you like to make regarding answers to the question above?

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

## V. TEACHING RESOURCES AND ACTIVITIES

A. How would you rate the following teaching resources for your social studies program?

| | Very Satisfactory | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | No Opinion |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Approved text: Human Heritage | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |

Please explain. ______________________________________________

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

| | Very Satisfactory | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | No Opinion |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2. Classroom Supplementary resources | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 3. Department of Education resources: | | | | |
| a) Education Manitoba | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| b) Manitoba Textbook Catalogue | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| c) Library - Video Tapes | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| d) Library - Print Materials | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| e) Library - MERC | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |

B. How often does each of these activities happen in your Social Studies class or as a part of your Social Studies course?

| | Daily | Weekly | Monthly | A Few Times a Year | Never |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Teacher presents information most of the class period while students listen or take notes. . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 2. Students express or defend their opinions on different sides of an issue during class . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 3. Students choose research activities or topics that interest them. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 4. Students participate in field trips, e.g., museums, libraries, businesses. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 5. Teachers use audio visual resources in class (e.g., films, filmstrips, T.V.) . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 6. Newspapers, magazines are used in the classroom. . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 7. Students use primary source materials, e.g., diaries, letters, photos, artifacts . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 8. Outside speakers visit the classroom . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 9. Simulations, games, role playing are used in the classroom. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 10. Students work on: | | | | | |
| i) individual projects . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| ii) group projects. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |

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## VI. EVALUATION

A. In formally evaluating student growth, what emphasis do you place on the following types of objectives:

| | Great Emphasis | Some Emphasis | No Emphasis |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Knowledge Objectives . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 2. Thinking and Research Skills Objectives. | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 3. Attitudes and Values Objectives. . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 4. Social Participation Objectives. . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ |

B. How important are the following for student evaluation in your Social Studies class?

| | For Instructional Planning Purposes | | | | For Grading Purposes | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Very Important | Important | Not Important | N/A | Very Important | Important | Not Important | N/A |
| 1. Samples of individual student work. . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 2. Samples of group projects . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 3. Performance in day-to-day lessons . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 4. Oral presentations. . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 5. Class tests: short answer . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 6. Class tests: paragraph essays. | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 7. Teacher-made final cumulative exam. . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 8. School-wide cumulative exam . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 9. Division/district-wide. cumulative exams. . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 10. Self-evaluation by students . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 11. Role playing,simulation,debates | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 12. Curriculum Assessment Support for Teachers (CAST) . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 13. Other (specify) ___________ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |

C. What supports would you need to help you with evaluation of student progress in social studies?

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

## VII. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN SOCIAL STUDIES

1. How many social studies inservices have you attended in the last two years?

   0 1 2 3 or more

2. What are the most pressing need(s) you have for social studies inservices?

   ______________________________________________

   ______________________________________________

   ______________________________________________

3. How important are each of the following as sources of ideas and information for your teaching of Social Studies?

| | Very Important | Important | Not Important | Not Applicable |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Colleagues? . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 2. Department Heads? . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 3. School Administration?. | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 4. Superintendent? . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 5. School division consultants? | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 6. M.T.S. (MSSTA, SAG)?. . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 7. Department of Education a) consultants? . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| b) Small Schools Conference? | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 8. Faculty of Education a) courses? . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| b) inservice? . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 9. Methodology texts?. . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 10. History and Social Science Teacher (journal)? | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 11. Manitoba Social Science Teachers Assoc. Journal? | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 12. Other? ___________ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |

Thank you for your co-operation. Please return this questionnaire by **June 9, 1989** in the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope.

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___ ___ ___

# SOCIAL STUDIES ASSESSMENT 1989

## TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE
## GRADE 10

This confidential questionnaire is designed to provide a description of the Social Studies program in your school. Please answer as a Social Studies teacher for Geography ________.

**PLEASE NOTE THAT IT IS IMPORTANT FOR THE SAKE OF RANDOMNESS THAT YOUR REPLIES REFER ONLY TO THE COURSE SPECIFIED ABOVE.**

Place an "X" on the line under your choice.

### I. TEACHER BACKGROUND

How many (academic or professional) college courses have you taken in each of the following disciplines? (Count 3 credits as one course and include both undergraduate and graduate courses.)

| | Number of 3-Credit Courses | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 or more |
| A. History . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| B. Geography . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| C. Other Social Sciences . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |

### II. SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

| | Non-Semestered | Semestered |
|---|---|---|
| A. Is the course you teach non-semestered or semestered? . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ |

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Other (specify) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| B. How many days are in 1 cycle of your timetable? . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |

| | Non-Semestered Courses | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Less Than 105 | 105-140 | 141-175 | 176-210 | 211-240 | Over 240 |
| C. How many minutes per cycle (per class) do you teach Social Studies?. . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| | **Semestered Courses** | | | | | |
| | Less Than 210 | 211-280 | 281-350 | 351-420 | 421-480 | Over 480 |
| | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |

D. To what degree are you able to influence the following decisions?

| | Great Influence | Some Influence | Little or No Influence |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Allocation of time for Social Studies. . | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 2. Allocation of time to specific topics. . | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 3. Text book choice . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 4. Selecting support material . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 5. Teaching strategies. . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 6. Evaluation of student progress . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 7. Inservice activities . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ |

E. Given your choice, would you teach this course? Yes ___ No ___

F. Do you feel qualified to teach this course? Yes ___ No ___

### III. RATIONALE FOR TEACHING SOCIAL STUDIES

There are various views on the role of Social Studies in the curriculum. Please indicate your views on each of the goal statements below.

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A. The main task of Social Studies is to preserve and transmit cultural heritage . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| B. Social Studies should teach students to make rational decisions about personal and social issues. . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| C. Social Studies should provide learners both with an awareness of possible futures and the roles they might play in developing these futures . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| D. Social Studies should provide students with the skills necessary to become independent learners. . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| E. Social Studies should teach a body of tested principles and generalizations about human relations and societies. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| F. Social Studies should help students understand the structure of the social sciences . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |

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## IV. CURRICULUM GUIDE

A. Are you using the 1984 Interim Guide? Yes ___ No ___

B. How would you rate the 1984 Grade 10 Interim Curriculum Guide on:

| | Very Satisfactory | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | No Opinion |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Social Studies K-12 Guide (Overview)? | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 2. Grade Ten Overview? | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 3. Unit Overview? | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 4. Topics and Focusing Questions? | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 5. Knowledge Objectives? | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 6. Thinking and Research Skills Objectives? | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 7. Attitude & Value Objectives? | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 8. Social Participation Objectives? | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 9. Suggested Teaching Strategies and Learning Activities | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 10. Suggested Learning Resources | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 11. Suggested Strategies for Evaluation of Students? | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 12. How would you rate the grade 10 Curriculum Guide overall? | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |

C. Approximately how many weeks did your class spend on each of the following units?

| | Semestered (No. of weeks) | Non-Semestered (No. of weeks) |
|---|---|---|
| Unit I - Overview of North America . . . . . | ___ | ___ |
| Unit II - The Agricultural Interior . . . . . | ___ | ___ |
| Unit III - The North . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ |
| Unit IV - The Western Cordillera. . . . . . . | ___ | ___ |
| Unit V - Atlantic Canada & Appalachia. . . . | ___ | ___ |
| Unit VI - The Industrial Heartland and the Megalopolis. . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ |
| Unit VII - The American South (optional) . . . | ___ | ___ |
| Unit VIII - Canadian, Continental, World Issues . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ |

What comments would you like to make regarding answers to the question above?

_______________________________________________

_______________________________________________

## V. TEACHING RESOURCES AND ACTIVITIES

A. How would you rate the following teaching resources for your social studies program?

| | Very Satisfactory | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | No Opinion |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Approved text: Continent of Contrast | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |

Please explain. _______________________________________________

_______________________________________________

_______________________________________________

| | Very Satisfactory | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | No Opinion |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2. Classroom Supplementary resources | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 3. Department of Education resources: | | | | |
| a) Education Manitoba | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| b) Manitoba Textbook Catalogue | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| c) Library - Video Tapes | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| d) Library - Print Materials | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| e) Library - MERC | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |

B. How often does each of these activities happen in your Social Studies class or as a part of your Social Studies course?

| | Daily | Weekly | Monthly | A Few Times a Year | Never |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Teacher presents information most of the class period while students listen or take notes. . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 2. Students express or defend their opinions on different sides of an issue during class . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 3. Students choose research activities or topics that interest them. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 4. Students participate in field trips, e.g., museums, libraries, businesses. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 5. Teachers use audio visual resources in class (e.g., films, filmstrips, T.V.) . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 6. Newspapers, magazines are used in the classroom. . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 7. Students use primary source materials, e.g., diaries, letters, photos, artifacts . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 8. Outside speakers visit the classroom . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 9. Simulations, games, role playing are used in the classroom. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 10. Students work on: | | | | | |
| i) individual projects . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| ii) group projects. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |

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## VI. EVALUATION

A. In formally evaluating student growth, what emphasis do you place on the following types of objectives:

| | Great Emphasis | Some Emphasis | No Emphasis |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Knowledge Objectives . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 2. Thinking and Research Skills Objectives. | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 3. Attitudes and Values Objectives. . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 4. Social Participation Objectives. . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ |

B. How important are the following for student evaluation in your Social Studies class?

| | For Instructional Planning Purposes | | | | For Grading Purposes | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Very Important | Important | Not Important | N/A | Very Important | Important | Not Important | N/A |
| 1. Samples of individual student work. . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 2. Samples of group projects . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 3. Performance in day-to-day lessons . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 4. Oral presentations. . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 5. Class tests: short answer . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 6. Class tests: paragraph essays. | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 7. Teacher-made final cumulative exam. . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 8. School-wide cumulative exam . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 9. Division/district-wide. cumulative exams. . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 10. Self-evaluation by students . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 11. Role playing,simulation,debates | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 12. Other (specify) ___________ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |

C. What supports would you need to help you with evaluation of student progress in social studies?

_______________________________________________

_______________________________________________

_______________________________________________

## VII. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN SOCIAL STUDIES

1. How many social studies inservices have you attended in the last two years?

0 1 2 3 or more

2. What are the most pressing need(s) you have for social studies inservices?

_______________________________________________

_______________________________________________

_______________________________________________

3. How important are each of the following as sources of ideas and information for your teaching of Social Studies?

| | Very Important | Important | Not Important | Not Applicable |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Colleagues? . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 2. Department Heads? . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 3. School Administration?. | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 4. Superintendent? . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 5. School division consultants? | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 6. M.T.S. (MSSTA, SAG)?. . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 7. Department of Education a) consultants? . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| b) Small Schools Conference? | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 8. Faculty of Education a) courses? . . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| b) inservice? . . . . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 9. Methodology texts?. . . | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 10. History and Social Science Teacher (journal)? | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 11. Manitoba Social Science Teachers Assoc. Journal? | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 12. Other? ___________ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |

Thank you for your co-operation. Please return this questionnaire by **June 9, 1989** in the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope.

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# APPENDIX B

## Protocols for Observational Study

These questions are intended to supplement the Teacher Survey by providing more in-depth information.

### Introduction

We appreciate you taking time to help us with examining the Grade 4 curriculum. Our basic purpose in these observations and interviews is to help us evaluate and revise the present curriculum. We know that teachers have a number of views about the curriculum and we hope to have a better understanding of these views by interviewing 30 teachers selected at random throughout the province. Your views will be important in making recommendations to Manitoba Education and Training. We are taping these interviews to be sure that we represent teacher views accurately. Your views will be kept anonymous. Manitoba Education and Training does not keep a record of teachers' names or the divisions in which they work for this project.

I. To what extent are you using the 1982 Social Studies Curriculum Guide?

### II. CONTENT SELECTION

A. At the present time you are free to select the communities you wish your class to study. How do you make these selections?

B. Do you use a community or a country approach? Why do you do this?

C. Do you think the organization of the curriculum is appropriate for Grade 4 children? (i.e., a mapping unit first and the community studies later)

### III. OBJECTIVES

### A. KNOWLEDGE

1. Are the concepts in the curriculum appropriate for the grade level?

2. Is the geographic terminology appropriate for the grade level?

3. Do the children come to you from the Grade Three program with a basic understanding of community? What sort of understanding of community did your students come to you with from Grade Three?

4. Do you think that children should be learning about world issues? (i.e., environmental issues?)

B. SKILLS

1. Are the skills appropriate for the grade level?

   a) What kind of research skills do you expect from Grade Fours?

   b) What kind of group skills do you expect from Grade Fours?

2. Do you teach mapping skills in a unit at the beginning of the year? If yes, why? and for how long? If no, how do you do this?

3. Are the mapping skills appropriate for the grade level?

4. Do you make use of the globe in social studies lessons? Why? Why not?

5. Do you make use of an atlas? Why? Which one? If not, why not?

C. VALUES AND ATTITUDES

1. Do you attempt to deal with bias and stereotyping in the Grade Four program? If so, how?

2. Is it possible for Grade Four children to develop empathy for children in other parts of the world? If so, how?

## D. SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

1. Given the nature of the Grade Four program, what kinds of social participation do you think are appropriate for Grade Four children?

## IV. RESOURCES

A. Do you use a text for the program?

If so, which one? Why did you select this text?

How would you rate it?

B. Are you able to locate appropriate resources for teaching world communities?

## V. TEACHING APPROACHES

A. What are the most effective ways you have found to give students an understanding and empathy for people who live in different parts of the world?

B. Do you think it is possible to enable grade four children to develop a visual image of a community in another part of the world? If so, how?

## VI. EVALUATION OF STUDENT PROGRESS

A. The curriculum has four kinds of goals: knowledge, thinking/research skills, values/attitudes and social participation.

1. When you are teaching, what emphasis do you put on each of these kinds of goals? (a rough percentage)

Knowledge
Thinking/Research Skills
Value/Attitude
Social Participation

2. In formally evaluating and reporting student growth, what emphasis do you place on the following:

   Knowledge
   Thinking/Research Skills
   Value/Attitude
   Social Participation

3. If there is a discrepancy, probe to find out why?

## VII. GENERAL EVALUATION OF GRADE FOUR SOCIAL STUDIES PROGRAM

A. What do you think interests your students most about the Grade Four Social Studies program?

B. What is the most difficult part of the Grade Four Social Studies program for your students?

C. What would you change about the Grade Four Program?

D. Do you require inservice for the Grade Four program? If yes, what kind of inservice is required?

E. How would you rate the Grade Four Social Studies program overall?

# RESEARCHERS' PROTOCOL

## OPENING COMMENT

"This year you have been studying about communities around the world. We would like to know some of the things you have learned. We will be taping our discussion so we can listen to it later so please be sure to speak up when you give answers.

## TASK ONE

### 1. COMMUNITY CONCEPT

We would like to start with asking you: What is a community?"

## TASK TWO

### 2. BUILDING A COMMUNITY

### A. Directions

"What do you see on this map? (river, highway, open fields) Some people want to start a new community on the land shown on this map. We want you to pretend that these people have asked you to plan their community for them. They want you to plan the best community you can.

So your job is to work in a group and figure out what should go into this community. First you should talk about what should go into this community and decide as a group what you should include.

You probably won't have time to plan the whole community because we only have about twenty minutes for this activity. What we would like you to do is to plan out what you think are the most important parts of the community.

You can use the blocks for buildings. Use only one or two blocks to represent each building. You can also use these felt pens to draw other things that you want in this community. If you need help labelling parts of the community, we will help you."

Now remember:

1. Make sure you plan your community before you start.
2. Make the best community that you can for these people. Make it one that you think would be the perfect community to live in.

### B. FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

1. "Tell us about your community."

Probe further with questions such as:
"What is this? (Point to a location or a building.)
Why did you put this here? etc."

Please note: If there is a problem with the location of a feature of the community, do not point out the problem. Limit your probing to the above two questions.

[Try to discover whether the students have a sense of different areas of the community, e.g., residential, etc. and the interrelationships among the parts.]

2. What would happen if we placed a ____ (e.g., a factory with large smoke stacks - something that has not been included by the students) right here? [Place it in a residential area.]

3. Follow up with:
   Where would a better place be to put the factory?

4. Before you planned this community, this whole area was just open fields. How do you think the community has changed this environment? Are these changes good or bad? Tell why?

5. Would you like to live in this community? Why? Why not? If you did live in this community, what would you like the most about it? What would you like the least about it?

6. What do you think this community will be like when you are grown up? How do you think it will have changed?

7. Now that you have planned your community and we have talked about it, is there anything you would like to change about your plan?

## TASK THREE

### 1. THE GLOBE

Now we are going to look at communities in other parts of the world but first:

1. "Let's begin by looking at this globe.
   - a. Do you know what this globe shows us?
   - b. Have you ever used a globe? When?
   - c. Do you know where you live on the globe?

   (Ask one of the children to show us. Ask the other children if they agree. Record whether they knew the location.)

   - d. What can you tell me about this area of the globe (pointing to the North Pole area)?
   - e. What about this area? (pointing to the South Pole area)
   - f. What about this part of the globe? (pointing to the Equator)
   - g. Point to the area of Alaska on the globe.
     "In this area there was a very large oil spill a few months ago.
     - i. Do you think this is a problem? Why?
     - ii. Is it a serious problem?
     - iii. Will it make a difference in your life?
     - iv. Is there anything you could do about this problem?"

h. Point to Ethiopia on the globe.

"In this area thousands of people are dying of hunger. Soon there may not be any of these people alive.

- i. Do you think this is a problem? Why?
- ii. Is it a serious problem?
- iii. Will it make a difference in your life?
- iv. Is there anything you could do about this problem?"

TASK FOUR

PART A. Knowledge of a world community

1. "Did you enjoy learning about people who live in different parts of the world?
   a. Which communities did you study this year?

   b. Which community (country) did you enjoy learning about the most?

   [At this point select a community with the children to answer the next set of questions. A point to consider is that the children seem to remember the last community they studied best. This may be the best one for the community building activity which follows.]

   c. Can you show us where this community is on the globe?
   (Ask one child to locate it. Ask if the others agree.

   d. Let's find where we live on this map.
   What continent do we live on?

   How could you get from our community to ______?

   What kind of transportation would you take to get there?

   Which direction would you travel to get to ______?

   How far way is ______?

   How long do you think it would take to get there?

   What bodies of water/land would you cross?

   What continent is ______ in?

   e. What can you tell me about the community (country) in which these people live?"

[Record children's ideas on chart paper.]

PART B Building a world community

a. "Earlier we asked you to build a community. Now we would like you to show us what a community in ________ would be like. (Help the children establish what kind of community they are going to try to show. e.g., village, city, setting, etc.)
Talk about what you want to put in the community first. Then draw the most important parts of the community.
You may use the felt pens to draw the community."

[Children may use the blocks if they wish.]

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

After the drawing is complete, ask the children to tell you about the community. Be sure to draw out the following kinds of information:

i. "What can you tell us about what it's like around this community? (land, climate, vegetation, animals, etc.

ii. What can you tell us about the way people meet their needs in this community? Probe for understanding of basic needs.

iii. Does this community have any problems?
How do the people deal with the problem(s)?

iv. How is the life of children living in this community different from your own?

You have given me several differences.
Why do you think the way they live is different from the way you live?

v. How is it the same?

Why do you think these things are the same?

vi. Do you think these people have a good life? Why? Why not? Would you like to live there? Why? Why not?

vii. If your parents took you to ______, do you think you would enjoy playing with the children there? Why? Why not? Would they enjoy playing with you?

viii. If a child from ______ came to your community, would you enjoy playing with him/her. Why? Why not?"

## RESEARCHERS' SUMMARY

1. How would you rate this group on the following dimensions:
(Use a 1-5 scale with a 1 being low and a 5 high)

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. | ability to plan . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| b. | ability to cooperate . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| c. | complexity of community (first) . . . . . . . . . . . | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| d. | complexity of community (second) . . . . . . . . . | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| e. | ability to visualize community (first) . . . . . . . . | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| f. | ability to visualize community (second) . . . . . . | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

## RESEARCH ASSISTANTS' PROTOCOL

Material and equipment:

Tape recorder, microphone and extension cord
Chart paper and masking tape
Six felt pens
Two 24" x 36" pieces of heavy white paper (one of which has a river and road drawn in one corner)
Set of blocks
Globe
Small laminated world maps
Watch

Note: Make sure that the tape recorder is running throughout the session. This will require turning over or changing tapes every half hour.

TASK ONE - Defining/describing what a community is.

Tape a piece of chart paper on a wall where students can see it and record their comments.

TASK TWO - Building a community

A. Community Building Activity:

Have the large piece of paper with the river and road, the blocks and the felt pens available as the researcher requires them.

Make brief notes on the following aspects of the Community Building task.

- To what extent do the students plan out their community prior to building it?

- To what extent do they plan out the tasks each will carry out in the community building process?

- To what extent do they cooperate while they are engaged in the task?

- Record the first several things the students place on the map in the order they put them on.

- Record any comments that indicate the students' understanding of communities.
  e.g., You can't have a community without cars.
  e.g., All the houses should be together.
  e.g., We have to have parks.

B. Follow-Up Questions:
During the follow-up questions, be sure that the tape recorder is working.

TASK THREE - Knowledge of the globe and understanding of world problems.

Have the globe available as the researcher requires it.

On the chart below record the student responses. If students make interesting comments or observations, you should record them also.

| | ADEQUATE ANSWER? | YES | NO |
|---|---|---|---|
| a. | Purpose of globe . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ |
| b. | Have used globe . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ |
| c. | Where they live . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ |
| d. | North Pole area . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ |
| e. | South Pole area . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ |
| f. | Equator . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ |

TASK FOUR - A world community.

A. Knowledge of a World Community:

For the first part of this activity, the researcher will be asking general questions about what communities students have studied, which one they enjoyed the most, where this community is and so on. The **small laminated world maps** and a **felt pen** are required here.

On the chart below record the student responses. If students make interesting comments or observations, you should record them also.

| | ADEQUATE ANSWER? | YES | NO |
|---|---|---|---|
| a. | Location of world community . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ |
| b. | Our continent . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ |
| c. | Transportation . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ |
| d. | Route to world community . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ |
| e. | Direction travelled . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ |
| f. | Distance . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ |
| g. | Time . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ |
| h. | Continent of world community . . . . . . . . . . . | ___ | ___ |

B. Building a World Community

Have a blank piece of the 24" x 36" white paper, the felt pens and the blocks available.

Make brief notes on the following aspects of the World Community Building task.

- To what extent do the students discuss what they should include prior to building the community?
- To what extent do they plan out the tasks each will carry out in the community building process?
- To what extent do they cooperate while they are engaged in the task?
- Record any comments that indicate the students' perceptions of the world community that they are representing.
  - e.g., evaluative comments or comments indicating an attitude toward the community. (good/bad, neat/gross, etc.)
  - e.g., comments that indicate insight into how people live in the community.
  - e.g., comments that suggest empathy with these people.

C. Follow-Up Questions:

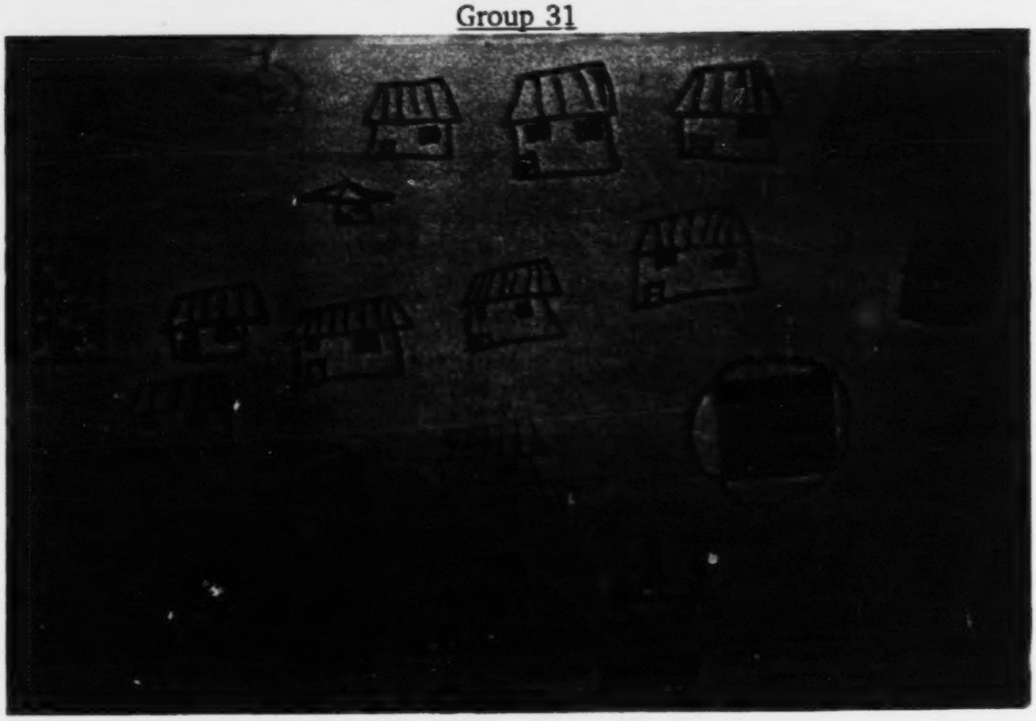
Record students' responses on chart paper.

When students start talking about the community that the researcher has selected to focus on, record their answers on chart paper (again, taped up so that students can see it).

# APPENDIX C

## Student Group Recreations from the Observational Study

### Group 31



### Group 4

Student Group Recreations from the Observational Study

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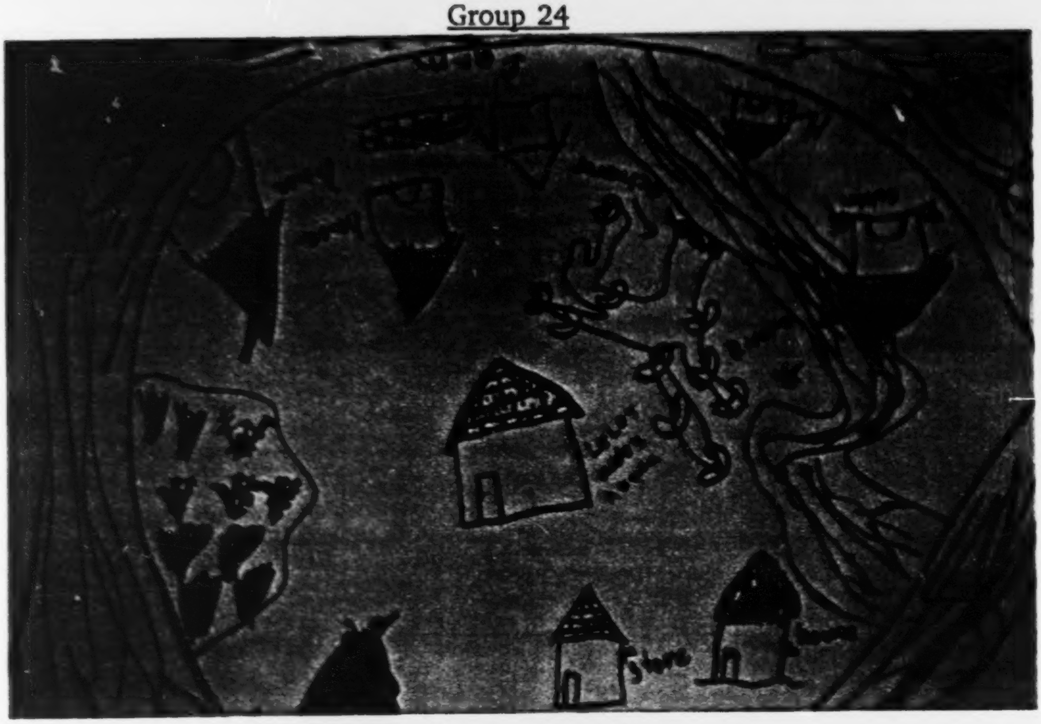
Group 12

Group 24



Student Group Recreations from the Observational Study

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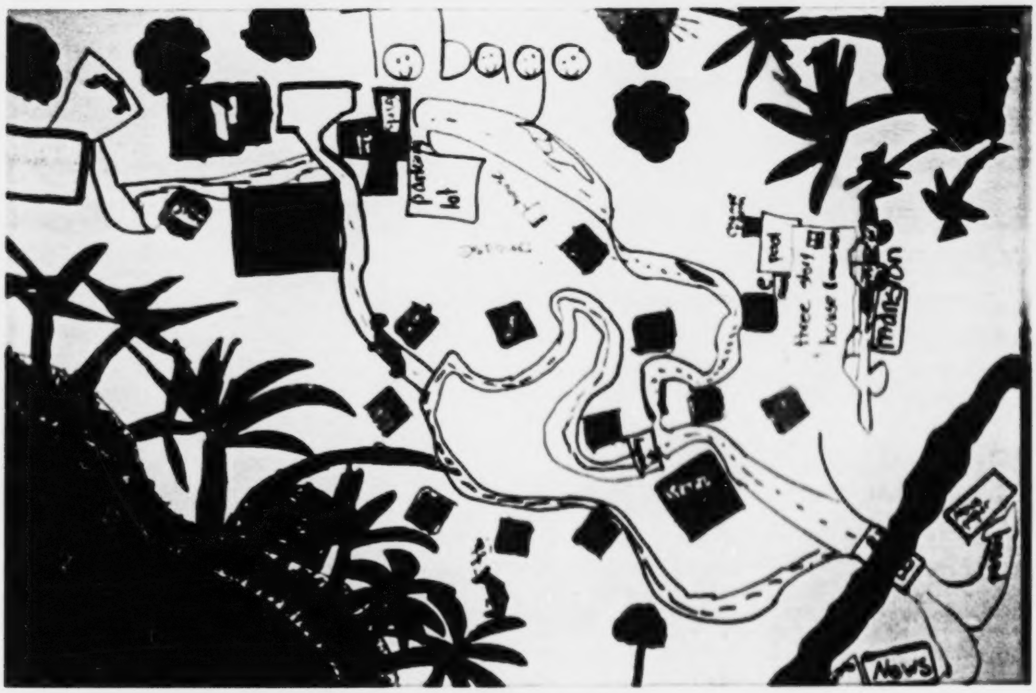
Group 18


Tobago
parking lot
pool
three story house
mansion
News

Group 27

Rainforest

Student Group Recreations from the Observational Study

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Group 25

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

# APPENDIX D

## Student Comments Relating to Quality of Life Judgements

Opportunities for play and enjoyment: (focus of 30% of students' comments)

Basis for positive response;

- *"There are lots of things to do, like sports."*
- *"They can go swimming any time. (go fishing, ride bikes, etc.)"*
- *"They don't have to go to school."*
- *"There would be lots of friends."*

Basis for negative response;

- *"Can't really play there - have to work too hard."*
- *"Picking rice all the time - not much time for family."*

Degree to which needs are met: (focus of 26% of students' comments)

Basis for positive response;

- *"They're not poor."*
- *"They have a good supply of cattle and sheep - food."*
- *"If they want something, they can just pick it."*
- *"They have enough - everything that they need."*

Basis for negative response;

- *"They're poor."*
- *"They don't have enough farm land."*
- *"They don't have clean water."*
- *"They don't have enough food."*
- *"There are no schools, they can't get educated."*

Security and safety considerations: (focus of 12% of students' comments)

Basis for positive response;

- *"There are not many robberies."*
- *"They don't have to worry."*

Basis for negative response;

- *"Lots of volcanoes erupt."*
- *"They are probably sick a lot."*
- *"Someone might cut your head off."*
- *"Something could get in your hut."*

Degree of physical comfort: (focus of 8% of students' comments)

Basis for negative response;

- *"The houses are small."*
- *"I would have to sleep on the floor."*
- *"I couldn't take a bath."*
- *"Its too hot."*

Degree of difference: (focus of 8% of students' comments)

Basis for positive response;

- *"They still don't believe in God but its just a little different than ours (our beliefs)."*

Basis for negative response;

- *"They have different things."*
- *"They would think that I look strange."*
- *"Their eyes are different."*
- *"They eat different things - things we would call 'yuck' (e.g., gorilla)"*
- *"They have different religions than us."*

Prefer it here: (focus of 7% of students' comments)

Basis for positive response;

- *"I would really like to live there!"*

Basis for negative response;

- *"I already like where I am."*
- *"I just like the way Canada is built."*
- *"Maybe I'd like to stay here."*

Its what they are used to: (focus of 5% of student comments)

Basis for positive response;

- *"Yes, its a good life for them."*
- *"They are used to it."*
- *"They don't know about us or our inventions so they think that their life is fine."*

# APPENDIX E

## Student Comments Relating to Interaction with a Child from a World Community

Three categories of student comments were all mentioned more than twenty times: games (27), general cultural differences (25), and language differences (23).

Games were usually seen as a vehicle for successful play. For example, students said such things as:

- *"Cause you have someone to play with, play games."*
- *"Yes, if they knew all the games that I know. Teach them the games. It would be nice if they teach us their games."*
- *"They could probably teach you - its a neat game - I'd like to play cricket."*

Less frequently, games were seen as a possible barrier to enjoyable interaction. Examples of this view include the following:

- *"But they probably have different games - probably mostly the same - might have more complicated games."*
- *"They wouldn't know what play is, probably, because they don't have any toys like we do. Well, they have wooden toys but they don't play the stuff we play.....They would just sit, stand and stare at you all day. "*

In the case of what have been labelled here "general cultural differences", most of the concerns that were voiced had to do with barriers to successful interaction. Examples of the negative dimensions of this category include the following:

- *"They wouldn't be at home here."*
- *"They might think we are a little different in the same way we think that they're different."*
- *"Because he's really different and I don't know him that well."*
- *"Might have to have a change of food - might not like the food we have."*

In a few instances, however, such general cultural differences were seen as reasons for successful interaction. Thus, for example, one student said;

- *"Just because they are different doesn't make any difference."*

With respect to language differences, it is important to note that this category contains the second highest frequency of student comments and this in spite of the fact that English is people's first language in at least eleven of the thirty community studies that students' comments were based on. Had all of the thirty communities' languages been other than English, the number of comments in this category would very likely have been much higher.

The reasons that involved language differences were almost entirely seen as barriers to enjoyable play. Thus students said such things as:

- *"No - different language - you wouldn't be able to understand them and they wouldn't be able to understand you."*
- *"They have an accent. They're all the same sort of accent. If we go there they might call us names."*

In a few instances language, while still an acknowledged problem, was seen as something that could be overcome. This view is typified by the following statements:

- *"Its not like they can't speak or nothing. We could probably teach them our language - how to read or write."*
- *"We could teach them to talk like us and write, and we'd ask him to teach us his language - Japanese."*

The balance of the categories dealt with issues and concerns that were raised eight or fewer times. Because of their similarity, the categories dealing with racial differences, poverty, expected behaviour and human qualities will be discussed first.

With respect to racial differences, it should be noted that about half or fifteen of the thirty community studies that students chose to be questioned about were likely to have involved racial differences. In seven of these fifteen instances, the groups clearly raised the issue of race and in two instances groups made unelaborated comments such as, *"Because they're different."*, which may have been intended to include racial differences. It is quite possible that had all thirty of the community studies involved racially different peoples, students would have raised this issue more frequently.

In all instances where racial differences were raised, they were seen as problematic. However, students' comments were roughly evenly divided between those that presented race as a barrier that would prevent successful interaction and those that presented it as an area that could be overcome. The following student comments are typical of those that indicated racial differences would likely prevent enjoyable play:

- *"Because he looks different than me."* (Based on study of Japan.)
- *"They would be afraid of you. They keep running away, and they wouldn't know what you would say - just like the Hutterites. We went to the Hutterite Colony. No, you'd never get a chance to (play). You'd never catch up with them....The child would be so afraid of us."* (Based on study of village in Zaire.)
- *"I might be embarrassed because we're different. They might make jokes. If they tease me, I'll beat them up."* (Based on study of Trinidad.)
- *"It would be hard to make friends. They'd say, "He looks dumb."* (Based on study of a village in India.)

The following are examples of reasons which suggest that racism is a fact but that the students thought they could, and indeed should, overcome this problem.

- *"Yes - Its the same thing with Blacks. Everyone is making fun of the Blacks so you have to try and play with him, just like you would do. Some people hate the Blacks. They just think its stupid because they're a different colour."* (From a group that chose Japan.)
- *"They should, they better! (enjoy playing with us). We could be different too. They might be a bit scared because they think that we'll make fun of them because they're Negro, Like Randy"* (a child in the group).

In both types of examples students were inclined to see racial barriers as residing in the other students who might be afraid or who might ridicule them.

Poverty was unequivocally raised as an issue only three times but it was implied in some of the comments that were included in the forgoing categories having to do with general cultural differences and games. In these three direct instances it was clearly seen as a barrier to successful interaction:

- *"It would be funner than going there (having child come to Manitoba community). But if they don't have any money and if they're hungry or something and they're just going to be walking on the roads in ditches and if they meet a store they won't be able to buy anything."* (Comments based on study of village in the Congo.)
- *"Depends. See if they have Barbie and G.I. Joe. It all depends on whether they have money or not. I don't want to play with a poor kid. (Another student says, "I would." Researcher asks, "What if he was the only kid there? Would you play with him?) Maybe - no - he'd play with himself because the poor kid would probably go, "Give me money, give me money, give me money, please!"* (Comments based on study of Australia.)
- *"When you go there and you have something that's better, they would say, "Oh, what a show off," and then they'd make fun of you and you would feel bad. Then you'd say, "I don't want to stay here." Big fights would start...and you'd probably say, "Well, they're dumb." and they'd say, "Your so lazy."* (Comments based on study of village in India.)

These comments are the most extended of any provided by students. They are also among the most descriptive. Although the number of comments is too small for drawing conclusions, these examples do suggest that poverty is a condition that some students have very strong feelings about, even to the extent that they would not want anything to do with students whom they perceive to be poor.

The category labelled "expected behaviour" was used for comments in which students suggested that playing with students from their world community was something that they should do, something that was expected of them. One of these was clearly offered in the context of trying to offset the racist behaviour of others and could just as well have been included in the category related to racial behaviour.

- *"Everyone is making fun of the blacks, so you have to try and play with him. You'd play with them and see."*

Others were more general and were not expressed with quite such a sense of burdensome duty.

- *"Yes, because its a new person and you should make friends with them, make them feel welcome."*
- *"If they came all the way to _______ (name of students' own community), show them some respect."*

The last of these four interrelated categories was used for comments which suggested that basic human qualities and traits played a part in students' opinions about whether or not they would enjoy playing with students from the world community that they had studied. In a very general comment, one student argued,

- *"They're just the same. They're just like you."*

The balance of the four comments in this category had to do with more specific traits or behaviours. The following are typical examples:

- *"Depends how nice they are. They might be conceited."*
- *"If they were nice (they would like us). That would be nice. We would look after them."*

Of the remaining two categories, the one labelled "new ideas and experiences" contains the greater number of student comments. This category was used for comments in which students clearly expressed enthusiasm for experiencing and learning about some aspect of another culture or in which they proclaimed an interest in sharing their culture with others. The following are typical examples:

- *"It might be interesting to see all the different things there compared to our lives here."*
- *"Meet new people, make new friends."*
- *"It would be fun climbing trees, helping them build their huts, and telling them things that they don't know. It would be nice."*
- *"I'd like to play with them there because you could try out new food and stuff."*
- *"Talk to him and explain what things are and how we are different than they are."*

The balance of the students' comments fell into a group that was labelled "dangers and discomforts". All five of these comments were clearly offered by students as reasons that would make play at best unenjoyable. For example, students said:

- *"If we go swimming, we might not be able to come, cause we might sink in the mud - and because of those fish!"*
- *"No, I wouldn't enjoy playing with them. (Researcher - "Why?") A Kid killed this girls uncle in Mexico. (Students in this group commenting on Australian community.) I don't think it would be a good idea to play there."*
- *"They'd freeze!"*
- *"They would be too big. They could kill me cause they know martial arts."*

# MANITOBA SOCIAL STUDIES ASSESSMENT 1989

## Summary Report

Manitoba
Education
and Training

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326

# MANITOBA SOCIAL STUDIES ASSESSMENT 1989

## SUMMARY REPORT

A REPORT OF THE

CURRICULUM SERVICES BRANCH

MANITOBA EDUCATION AND TRAINING

PROVINCE OF MANITOBA

327

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Summary report

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Winnipeg, Manitoba October, 1991

# PREFACE

This *Summary Report* is the third of three reports of the findings of the 1989 Social Studies Assessment for grades 4, 8, and 10 of English language schools. It contains a brief description of the study along with recommendations based on teacher opinions and the judgement of the Technical Advisory Committee. Members of the Committee reviewed the data and interpreted it in the light of their considerable knowledge and experience.

There are two other series of reports in this assessment. They are the *Preliminary Report* which presents the actual data and the *Final Report* which analyzes the data and presents conclusions and recommendations.

The *Preliminary Report* was distributed to all schools in the province as well as to school division offices, to teacher and trustee associations, to libraries, and to the universities. This *Summary Report* will receive the same distribution as the *Preliminary Report*, while the more extensive *Final Report* will only be distributed to school division offices, teacher and trustee organizations, libraries, and universities. Copies of the *Final Report*, however, can be obtained from Manitoba Education and Training on request.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This assessment would not have been possible without assistance from the many people involved in the development of the tests and the production of reports. The co-operation of the students who wrote the tests and the teachers of these students was also very important to this assessment. Special mention must be made of a number of groups.

- The contract team who gave professional assistance in every phase of the project.
- The Joint Committee on Evaluation which provided guidance throughout the program.
- The Social Studies Technical Advisory Committee which advised on test production and analysis of results.
- The teachers and others who participated in the review of the objectives.
- The school administrators, teachers, and students who were involved in the pilot testing.
- The teachers who participated in the teacher surveys.
- The divisions and schools that released their teachers to assist in the program.
- The secretaries of Manitoba Education and Training for their excellent work in typing the manuscripts.
- Don Sabourin for assistance in determining the sampling procedures and the data analysis procedures.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

PREFACE . . . . . . . . . . iii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS . . . . . . . . . . v

INTRODUCTION . . . . . . . . . . 1

GRADE 4 SOCIAL STUDIES ASSESSMENT . . . . . . . . . . 3
- Student Data . . . . . . . . . . 3
- Teacher Data . . . . . . . . . . 7
- Recommendations . . . . . . . . . . 10

GRADE 8 SOCIAL STUDIES ASSESSMENT . . . . . . . . . . 15
- Student Data . . . . . . . . . . 15
- Teacher Data . . . . . . . . . . 19
- Recommendations . . . . . . . . . . 20

GRADE 10 SOCIAL STUDIES ASSESSMENT . . . . . . . . . . 25
- Student Data . . . . . . . . . . 25
- Teacher Data . . . . . . . . . . 29
- Recommendations . . . . . . . . . . 30

COMPARISON OF 1984 AND 1989 RESULTS . . . . . . . . . . 35
- Recommendation . . . . . . . . . . 36

331

# INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the provincial assessment program is to ascertain the extent to which the goals and objectives of the provincial curriculum are being achieved and to point out the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum as it is being taught in schools. The assessment uses student group performance data to assess the achievement of objectives, not to test individual students.

The assessment procedure includes review and selection of test objectives by experienced teachers, preparation of test items by contractors, and their review by a Technical Advisory Committee of teaching specialists. The procedure also includes a survey of teachers in the relevant subject and grade levels. Where appropriate, a comparison test is also included in order to make comparisons with any previous assessments.

The 1989 social studies assessment was conducted at grades 4, 8 and 10 in June. It included a survey of teachers at those grade levels. There were also comparison tests at grades 3, 6, 9, and 12 in order to make comparisons with the data obtained in the previous social studies assessment conducted in 1984. A new feature of the 1989 assessment was the inclusion of a performance component which included an observation study of students and interviews with teachers, both done at the grade 4 level.

Following established statistical procedures, the assessment was conducted with a random sample of students, drawn by systematically selecting every tenth student from class lists provided by the schools of the province. It should be noted that these lists were confined to Anglophone public schools. Private schools, Franco-Manitoban and immersion schools were not included.

The teacher surveys were also conducted on a random sample basis at grades 4 and 8 where approximately 50% of teachers were surveyed. At the grade 10 level, all the social studies teachers were surveyed.

The student tests consisted mainly of multiple-choice items in order to facilitate machine scoring. There was also an essay-writing component. All the items were designed with the objectives of the social studies curriculum in mind and thus dealt with the four categories of objectives found in the curriculum: knowledge; thinking and research skills; attitudes and values; and social participation.

The teacher surveys were designed to obtain information relevant to questions of curriculum implementation and delivery. This information included teachers' academic and professional preparation; attitudes to the curriculum and resources; professional development activities; preferred teaching strategies, and so on.

After the coding and scoring of items, responses were scanned by computer. Item analysis led to the calculation of means and standard deviations. Data from the grade 4 observational study and from teacher interviews and surveys were analyzed to reveal common trends or issues related to the implementation of the curriculum.

It must be emphasized that this report is only a summary of a much longer and more detailed Final Report. It can, therefore, deal only in a very general way with the findings of the assessment. Readers who want more detailed information are urged to turn to the full report, which is available from Manitoba Education and Training.

# GRADE 4 SOCIAL STUDIES ASSESSMENT

The grade 4 assessment consisted of a test and an observational study as well as a teacher survey and teacher interviews designed to assess the categories of objectives outlined in the introduction.

## STUDENT DATA

KNOWLEDGE

The assessment of the knowledge objectives of the grade 4 curriculum was complicated by the curriculum's structure. While the first unit of the curriculum (Locating People and Places in the World) is common for all the children in the province, the remaining units (World Communities) may be taught by selecting from a wide range of world communities. Consequently, there was no common body of content which could be used as a basis for testing factual information. As a result, assessment items centered on concepts and generalizations common to any world community that might have been studied by a grade 4 class.

In all, 46 knowledge objective items assessed the concepts of community, community situation, meeting needs and wants, quality of life, knowledge of a specific community and general knowledge.

The concept of community is critical to the grade 3, 4, and 5 Social Studies programs. Students in grade 4 seem to have a rudimentary understanding of this concept. However, given the importance of this concept for the study of communities in other parts of the world, the members of the TAC felt that the attributes of this concept should be made clearer to students.

Students' understanding of other concepts such as community situation, meeting needs and wants, and quality of life were judged by the TAC to be satisfactory or very satisfactory.

In the next section of the knowledge test students were asked to identify a world community they had studied during the year. Twenty-nine percent of the children identified a community; while 62% identified a country. These findings are consistent with the reports of teachers, the majority of whom report that they are using a country or a combined country/community approach to teach the grade 4 social studies.

Fifty percent or more of the students were able to provide two or more pieces of correct information about the community they had studied under headings such as land, food, homes and jobs. Approximately 5% of the students gave answers which showed that they not only recalled the information, but that they understood the relationships between two or more pieces of information which they had recalled.

In the category of general information, 95% of the students knew that they lived in Canada, 85% knew they lived in Manitoba, 83% knew the capital of the province of Manitoba; while only 58% could name the two provinces on either side of Manitoba and only 57% knew the capital of Canada. Since the curriculum guide does not specifically ask for this information to be taught to grade 4 students, the TAC felt these results were satisfactory.

On the other hand, the results of students' knowledge of the globe and world maps were disappointing to the TAC members since many teachers reported spending long periods of time on this area of knowledge. While 88% of the students could identify North America on a globe, only 51% could identify the Atlantic Ocean. Students also had difficulty identifying landforms such as delta (47%) and peninsula (40%).

### THINKING AND RESEARCH SKILLS

A total of 40 items were used to assess students' mapping, thinking and research skills. These items which were directed at assessing the achievement of objectives relating to mapping skills, locating and gathering information, finding main ideas, and providing evidence and reasons for answers were drawn from typical social studies sources such as maps, charts, graphs, pictures, tables of contents, and indexes from reference books.

Students' performances on the mapping items indicated that they were able to use compass directions, simple grids, legends, and scales satisfactorily. There was some indication that global grids involving degrees and compass directions are very difficult for most grade 4 students and that these might best be treated as optional topics at this level.

Students were able to identify encyclopedia volumes according to given topics and use an index and a table of contents to locate topics satisfactorily. Students were also able to gather information from graphs, charts, and pictures satisfactorily. Students had more difficulty identifying main ideas from a variety of sources and providing reasons or evidence for their conclusions and their opinions.

**ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

In one section of the assessment students were asked to respond to 29 items designed to sample their perceptions related to the attitudes and values outlined in the grade 4 curriculum.

Students were able to understand and make judgments related to the quality of life in the communities they had studied. Their perception on the similarity of human needs across cultures varied somewhat depending on the degree of cultural differences between their own and the other world culture studied. To a certain extent their perceptions of needs and wants and the various ways of meeting these across cultures were clouded by cultural differences.

Students also seemed to demonstrate a tolerant attitude towards other cultures and seemed to be aware of global interconnectedness. They seemed to prefer resolving conflicts by talking rather than by fighting, whether it be on a personal or on a global level, but, understandably, did not feel empowered to assist in solving world problems. Depending on the degree of personal sacrifice, grade 4 students were prepared to share Canada's wealth with less fortunate people in the world, were not chauvinistic about Canada, and were prepared to befriend someone from another culture or country. The large majority of students enjoyed studying world communities and felt that such learning was important.

**SOCIAL PARTICIPATION**

Since it is not possible to evaluate participation in a social action on a written test, 16 items were developed to explore students' reactions to a variety of social settings and to explore the kinds of social actions in which they had participated in school and in the community.

Students indicated that they see themselves as being responsible and involved in the resolution of social problems of various kinds. Over 60% of them reported being involved in some kind of social action both within and beyond the school community. These responses were deemed to be very satisfactory by the members of the TAC.

**OBSERVATIONAL STUDY**

This part of the assessment consisted of observing and questioning 30 groups of four grade 4 students as they participated in a sequence of tasks. These tasks included an in-depth discussion of the concept of community; a community model-building activity; exploration of the globe and global issues; and an interview about one of the communities the students had studied during the year. These activities paralleled the types of questions in the written test but were intended to provide more in-depth insights into the students' understandings of these critical learnings than could be ascertained from the written test.

Analysis of the results of the first task reinforced the findings of the written test with regard to the students' understandings of the concept of community. Once again, students' ideas about community were fragmentary and incomplete. They seemed to be unaware of the attributes of community.

The second task allowed the researchers to observe the abilities of the groups of children to plan and work together as they built a model community. Generally speaking, children did a minimum of planning prior to the actual building of the model. Working cooperatively was slightly more evident as students shared materials and worked together politely and patiently to complete the task.

The actual models built in the second task indicated that children were most aware of those features of communities which were clearly visible in the community. Other essential features of communities such as water supplies, power, garbage disposal, safety services, communication services, government, social organizations, etc. were virtually absent from their models.

The third task indicated that students were fairly familiar with the globe, although only 23 of the 30 groups of students could situate their community on it. The students were also very familiar with the current global issues (1989) such as world hunger and pollution. Depending on the type of problem, they also thought they could help to solve these problems.

Finally, the students were asked to identify a community they had studied during their grade 4 program. The first finding of interest for the assessment is that the great majority of students did not identify a community. Rather, they identified a country. What this suggests is consistent with the findings from the teacher surveys and interviews. Countries continue to be the major organizer of the grade 4 program.

Once they had identified a community or country, the students had no difficulty in locating the place on a world map, naming the continent it was on and in describing appropriate means of transportation for getting there from their home community. They did have difficulty in knowing the distance and time it would take to travel to the community or country.

Through discussion, students provided a great deal of information about the community or country they had studied. The overall impression of this information was that of a travel brochure. Basically, their responses suggested a rather rudimentary and fragmentary picture of the community or country they had studied.

During the actual task of trying to build a model of a world community they had studied, many groups of students had great difficulty. This was especially true, of course, for those who had studied countries. Even taking this into consideration, the analysis of their work indicated a fairly shallow picture of community infrastructure.

Discussion which followed the building of world communities revealed that students had many insights into lifestyles and problems in these communities. The students also revealed that the differences between themselves and the children in other locations would be a barrier to interaction. When this interaction was to take place in the other students' communities, only 13 of the 30 groups thought it would be an enjoyable experience. While locating the interaction in the relative security of the students' home communities increased the number of groups expressing positive attitudes to 20 of 30, there remained a significant minority of the groups that were undecided or that indicated they would not find it enjoyable. Their reasons for this were commonly related to student concerns about the problems that could arise from what might broadly be called "cultural differences", including language differences. Racial differences and poverty were also factors which they thought might influence this interaction.

## TEACHER DATA

### PROFESSIONAL TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The responses on the teacher questionnaire indicate that most grade 4 teachers have taken at least some courses related to the social studies. They also suggest, however, that quite a large proportion may have taken a minimal number of courses; for example, only 24% of respondents reported having taken 4 or more 3-credit courses in History and only 21% took 4 or more 3-credit courses in Geography. While these data probably reflect the demands arising from the generalist nature of elementary teaching, they also point to important gaps in the education of some elementary teachers.

Just over half of the teachers (51%) said they had not attended any inservice sessions related to the grade 4 social studies program. In addition, 43% indicated that there had been no such inservices available to them.

Grade 4 teachers have attended very few social studies inservices in the past two years. Thirty-five percent have attended none and another 35% have attended only one. In addition, 51% of the teachers said they had not attended inservices on the grade 4 curriculum at any time.

**TIME ALLOCATION**

Considerable variation was observed in the time spent teaching social studies in grade 4. Manitoba Education and Training prescribes that 30 minutes per day be allotted to teaching social studies in grade 4. While it is difficult to interpret the responses to this item because of the nature of the question, it can be stated that most teachers (78%) work within a six-day cycle, that 47% of teachers spend the recommended time allocation on social studies, 40% spend less, and 9% spend more.

**VIEWS**

Teachers' views on the purpose of teaching social studies varied somewhat on a series of six goal statements proposed. Goals related to developing skills, decision-making abilities and preparing students for the future received somewhat more favorable responses than those related to more traditional goals of preserving and transmitting cultural heritage, understanding the structure of social sciences, and teaching tested principles and generalizations about human relations and societies.

**CURRICULUM GUIDE**

A very high proportion of teachers (88%) reported that they use the curriculum guide. With respect to the guide as a whole, 73.5% of the respondents indicated it was either satisfactory or very satisfactory. Three important aspects of the guide received noticeably lower unsatisfactory ratings: teaching strategies and learning activities (19%); learning resources (22%); and evaluation strategies (25%).

**UNIT TOPICS**

Prior to 1982, the Manitoba Social Studies Curriculum suggested that global education be carried out through the study of countries selected on the basis of cultural and environmental diversity. The current curriculum uses similar criteria but indicates that such study should focus primarily on specific communities rather than countries. The teacher surveys indicated that only 11% have fully adopted this approach, while another 56% take an approach that involves the study of both communities and countries. However, more than a quarter (27%) indicated they still use the country approach. The most startling piece of information, however, is that 27% of the selection of communities/countries reported by teachers focus on communities, regions and provinces of Canada. This is higher than the proportion of selections from other parts of the world. Given that the intent of the program is to have students study communities in parts of the world other than Canada, this indicates that a sizeable number of teachers are misunderstanding or ignoring the intent of the program.

In making their unit selections, teachers indicated they were influenced most by the resources available (57%), by the need to represent a variety of physical areas around the world (53%) and by student interest (51%). More than half of the teachers (52%) allowed students to make choices of the units to be studied. Depending on the particular issue, between 76% and 86% of the teachers sampled thought it appropriate to include issues of hunger, conservation, peace, and pollution as topics for grade 4 students. In addition, 78% of the teachers reported using current events as part of their program. Dealing with bias and stereotyping and developing a sense of empathy and responsibility towards others were also seen as important parts of the program.

### RESOURCES AND STRATEGIES

Forty-four percent of teachers said they used a textbook for the program and 84% to 93% rated these as satisfactory or very satisfactory.

The most frequently cited source for resources (other than texts) are teachers' own schools (88%), personal resources (86%), and current newspapers and magazines (85%).

Teachers reported using a variety of teaching strategies. While many teachers employ a reasonable range of appropriate strategies, some potentially valuable approaches, such as information exchanges with students in other communities, the use of experiences of local people, the use of food and other direct cultural experiences, and the use of drama and other forms of expression are under utilized.

### EVALUATION

Ninety percent (90%) of the teachers report placing some emphasis or great emphasis on formal evaluation of student growth in knowledge objectives, attitude and value objectives, and social participation objectives. With respect to evaluating thinking and research skills objectives, 63% indicated placing a great emphasis and 32% some emphasis on these objectives.

### TEACHER INTERVIEWS

The thirty teachers selected to participate in the observational study were interviewed for approximately 30 minutes each. These interviews were taped, transcribed and analyzed. The findings of these interviews support the findings of the teacher surveys but provide more insights into teachers' thinking about some of the critical issues. Some of these issues include the teaching of geographic terminology, the language of the curriculum, research skills and mapping skills (particularly latitude and longitude concepts), and evaluation. Interested readers are encouraged to refer to the Final Report for details.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The grade 4 recommendations deal with curriculum guide revisions, learning resource development and identification and increased opportunities for professional development and are thus directed primarily to Manitoba Education and Training. Clearly, however, school divisions and teachers have the responsibility of implementing these curricular changes, of using new resources, and of engaging in professional development. In turn, this points to the responsibility that professional organizations and teacher preparation institutions must accept if the recommendations are to result in improved social studies learning experiences for students.

For easy reference, the following recommendations have been directed to their most obvious implementers according to the legend below:

Manitoba Education and Training = M
Teachers = T
School Administrators = S
Faculties of Education = F

| M | T | S | F | |
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| ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | 1. Manitoba Education and Training, in consultation with teachers and school administrators, should review the time allocations for school subjects taking into account the amount of time required for meeting program expectations, the time available for instruction, and the working conditions that will enable recommended program time allotments to be met. |
| ✓ | | ✓ | | 2. Manitoba Education and Training should place a high priority on identifying and developing instructional resources that are appropriate to the grade 4 social studies program and, in cooperation with school divisions and schools, ensure that these resources are available in all Manitoba grade 4 classrooms. |
| ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 3. The curriculum guide and related professional development activities should emphasize a wide range of appropriate teaching strategies and learning activities. |

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| ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 4. Evaluation should receive special emphasis in curriculum revisions and inservice activities. A supplement to the grade 4 program guide, setting out methods and examples of evaluation with regard to all four program objectives, should be developed and made available in all of Manitoba's grade 4 classrooms. |
| ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 5. Increased resources should be committed to social studies inservice. Such inservice should be used as a vehicle for developing local expertise and leadership; planned and delivered by local teachers; and include principals in order to enhance their curriculum leadership capabilities. |
| ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | 6. A stronger rationale should be developed for the curriculum's small-scale community focus. This rationale should deal with ways in which small-scale community studies can be implemented in the study of various world cultures. |
| ✓ | | | | 7. Definitions and attributes of "community" should be set out more clearly in the curriculum guide. |
| ✓ | | ✓ | | 8. The resources necessary for engaging students in the study of world communities in the manner recommended in the curriculum should be identified. |
| ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | 9. Sample units should be developed which demonstrate a small-scale community approach; provide examples of a wide repertoire of teaching strategies and learning activities; contain and refer to resources and materials that enable the teaching of mapping in the context of small-scale community studies (e.g., maps, graphs, visual materials); demonstrate the teaching of research and higher order thinking skills in the context of small-scale community studies; and demonstrate means of evaluation. |
| ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | 10. The communities selected for illustration in sample units should be developed to reflect a balance in the community selection criteria found in the curriculum: levels of development, geographical diversity, and cultural diversity. |

The curriculum guide should be revised to:

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| ✓ | | | | 11. indicate clearly that mapping skills, while an important part of the program, are subsidiary to those aspects of the program having to do with the study of world communities and the development of intercultural understanding; |
| ✓ | | | | 12. specify clearly and delimit the mapping skills that it is reasonable to expect most grade 4 students to be able to use and set clear limits on the proportion of the program to be used for teaching of mapping skills; |
| ✓ | | | | 13. emphasize, through rationale, structure, and examples, the teaching of mapping skills in the context of studying world communities rather than in isolation as a separate initial unit; |
| ✓ | | | | 14. identify resources such as maps and other materials which permit and encourage the teaching of mapping skills in the context of studying specific world communities; |
| ✓ | | | | 15. provide examples of appropriate teaching strategies and learning activities for teaching mapping skills; |
| ✓ | | | | 16. specify what might reasonably be expected of most grade 4 students in terms of knowledge of the globe and geographical terms; |
| ✓ | | | | 17. clarify the use of coordinates and place emphasis upon simple grid systems; |
| ✓ | | | | 18. indicate expectations regarding scale and provide examples of ways to teach and assess the use of simple map scales that are appropriate for grade 4 students; |

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| ✓ | | | | 19. include appropriate strategies for helping students understand distance and time with respect to locating world communities and to make clear to teachers that student difficulty with these concepts is a minor matter at the grade 4 level and should not be seen as an obstacle to studying world communities; |
| ✓ | | | | 20. define research in a broader context and include specific models (incorporating ideas for teaching and evaluating research skills) of library and other types of research processes suitable for grade 4 students; |
| ✓ | | | | 21. provide guidelines for engaging students in the identification of problems and the formulation of questions; |
| ✓ | | | | 22. provide teachers with examples of higher order thinking skills in the context of social studies as well as strategies for the development and evaluation of these skills; |
| ✓ | | | | 23. specify clearly the grade 4 program's attitude and value objectives including the global education concepts assessed in the attitude and value section of this assessment; |
| ✓ | | | | 24. include a clear statement on teachers' roles and responsibilities with respect to the teaching of attitudes and values in the context of the grade 4 social studies program; |
| ✓ | | | | 25. provide clear examples and guidelines for assisting teachers in teaching and evaluating attitude and value objectives; |
| ✓ | | | | 26. include a clear statement regarding the importance of teaching about bias and stereotyping and of developing cross-cultural empathy in the context of the grade 4 program; |

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| ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 27. include examples of specific teaching strategies, learning activities, and methods of evaluation with respect to bias, stereotyping, and the development of cross-cultural empathy; |
| ✓ | ✓ | | | 28. include a clear and concise definition of social participation objectives (including group process and social action objectives) and a rationale for their inclusion in the program; |
| ✓ | ✓ | | | 29. include more and clearer examples of strategies and activities for teaching and evaluating the program's social participation objectives; and |
| ✓ | ✓ | | | 30. include a group process model along with examples of how to teach and evaluate group process skills. |
| ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 31. Resources that are useful in helping students identify with and understand people in other cultures should be identified, developed and made available to teachers. Stories and other materials that encourage imaginative identification with children in different cultural settings should be an important part of these resources. |
| ✓ | ✓ | | | 32. Teachers should be provided with suggestions for making use of local people and other resources that would assist them in making cross-cultural understanding an important part of the grade 4 social studies program. |
| ✓ | | ✓ | | 33. Resources available from international development agencies (e.g., Red Cross, UNICEF, IDEA Centre, etc.) should be reviewed for use in supporting the program's social participation objectives and subsequently, annotated lists and sample materials be circulated to all elementary schools in the province. |

# GRADE 8 SOCIAL STUDIES ASSESSMENT

The grade 8 portion of the assessment consisted of a student test and a teacher survey which focused on assessing the categories of objectives outlined in the introduction.

## STUDENT DATA

KNOWLEDGE

The conclusion that emerges most strikingly from the section of the assessment devoted to knowledge of facts and generalizations is that students performed much better on the earlier units of the program than on the later ones. This is consistent with the data analysis which showed that many grade 8 classes spent disproportionate amounts of time on certain units. In practice, it is not unusual to see classrooms which, by Christmas, have only just completed the study of ancient civilizations. As a result, less time is available for the study of later units, with the results that are apparent on this assessment.

It is noticeable also that students for the most part do better when an item calls for a clear, black-and-white factual response than when it calls for the puzzling out of a relationship or the assessment of a number of factors. This is, of course, not unexpected since such items are by their very nature more complex in both their content and wording. It is also consistent with what we know of the way in which many grade 8 students typically think, with their unease with the abstract and their relative comfort with the concrete and specific. This is not to say that such students cannot work with the abstract and the complex, but rather that many of them do not do so without careful teaching and preparation.

There is also some evidence in the responses to this section of the assessment that students are not as conversant as one might have expected, with key terms, names, and concepts. There appear to be wide variations in what students do or do not know and it might well be that this reflects what they have been taught. It must also be remembered that the assessment was done at the very end of the school year and, therefore, that students could easily have forgotten material that they had earlier learned, especially since the assessment did not take the form of a final examination requiring review and special study. It can happen that History is taught in a way such that each unit is dealt with sequentially but in isolation, so that there is little opportunity for review and the cumulative reinforcement of knowledge.

Of the 31 items dealing with knowledge of facts and generalizations, 13 were answered correctly by fewer than 50% of the students, and 18 by more than 50%. Of these 18, 10 items were answered correctly by 60% or more of the students, and 8 by between 50% and 59%. These results suggest that the assessment items were a reasonably fair test of student performance and were neither too easy nor too difficult overall.

Perhaps the most important conclusion to be drawn from this section of the assessment is that the later units of the grade 8 program do not appear to be achieving their objective. The assessment does not provide any information as to why this should be so. We do not know whether the problem is with the textbook, the curriculum, the students, or the teachers, but we do know that there appears to be a problem.

**THINKING AND RESEARCH SKILLS**

What sort of picture emerges of grade 8 students' proficiency in thinking and research skills? First, it seems that some two-thirds of students can adequately handle the basic skills involved in comprehension. Such, at least, is the conclusion to be drawn from the fact that 69.5% of students successfully answered items requiring the understanding of information presented to them in written form. Second, this figure drops to roughly 60% when skills of a somewhat higher order are involved, for example, deciding on the verifiability and objectivity of a source or a statement or applying a conclusion in a new setting. Third, this figure in turn drops to about 50% when students are asked to work with visual or pictorial information or to evaluate sources of information for reliability or objectivity. Fourth, about one-half of grade 8 students performed below expectations on the essay portion of the assessment.

So far as the written essay was concerned, it seems that some 50% of grade 8 students experience some difficulty with the basics of writing, such as punctuation, spelling, and sentence formation. Conversely, it can be argued that some 50% of grade 8 students are writing at a satisfactory or even better level. Nonetheless, obviously these results are cause for concern. It must be remembered that the students were working under examination conditions. They had limited time, were not psychologically prepared, and submitted only a first draft. With time to rewrite and revise, it could well be that students' writing would be of a higher quality. This said, however, it seems that students are not getting enough practice in writing as part of their work in social studies. There are ways of covering the content of a History course in combination with teaching for skill development, especially in the case of writing, and teachers should be encouraged to use them extensively. In this regard, the recent emphasis on "language for learning" could be extremely helpful for social studies teachers.

How these findings are interpreted obviously depends upon one's expectations. At least one-half of grade 8 students are apparently being well served by the grade 8 social studies program. These students are meeting the thinking and research skill objectives of the program. Indeed, so far as basic skills are concerned, this number is more in the neighbourhood of two-thirds. At the same time, the program is apparently not achieving the objectives with roughly one-half of the students. It must, of course, always be kept in mind that we are talking here about grade 8 students and, therefore, we should ensure that our expectations are not unrealistic. Nonetheless, the assessment was designed, pilot-tested, and implemented with this in mind and the Technical Advisory Committee believes that the items were fair and representative both of the curriculum and of the expected performance of grade 8 students. The evidence from the assessment suggests very strongly that students had little difficulty in understanding the items and knowing what was expected. There were reports that in some cases students did not take the assessment seriously as it did not "count for marks". Indeed, there is reason to suspect that in some cases teachers and administrators did not take the assessment seriously and this must surely have had an effect on students. In any event, it seems that the grade 8 social studies program is not yet meeting its skill objectives in the case of roughly one-half of students. While there is no sudden and dramatic solution to this problem, there are things that can be done, as suggested in the recommendations.

ATTITUDES AND VALUES

All in all, the responses to the section of the assessment dealing with attitudes and values present an encouraging picture. Most students are able to state an opinion and the opinions themselves give no immediate cause for concern. Students appear to have a commitment to the past; they also voice concern for the environment and for the developing world. There might be some cause for concern in the substantial minority (40%) who apparently do not hold high hopes for the future and who support (at least potentially) restrictions on immigration from developing countries, but the available data make it difficult to arrive at any unambiguous conclusions. Overall, however, it seems that in the area of attitudes and values the grade 8 social studies program is achieving its objectives. It might be possible in future years to reduce the rate of undecided responses below the approximately 20% that appeared on this assessment, but this rate is not altogether unreasonable, and it appears to be something more than just an automatic response by uninterested students. It is notable, for example, that on complex items calling for the weighing of difficult issues or which relied on specific knowledge, the undecided rate increased markedly. On the other hand, on relatively straightforward items, it dropped. Evidence such as this suggests, though it can never prove, that students took the items seriously and gave a considered answer.

SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

The findings flowing from the social participation objectives are not dissimilar to those of the grade 10 assessment and they reveal a picture of classrooms in which there is a fairly high degree of discussion and attention to current events; a somewhat lower but still acceptable frequency of group work and other forms of student involvement; and a much lower use of visiting speakers and field trips. The Technical Advisory Committee concluded that, while it thought there was some room for an increased amount of group work and of group-based activities (role-playing, reports, and so on), these findings were acceptable. The Committee noted that speakers and field trips caused particular problems in that they were often disruptive of school schedules and were, in any event, often difficult to organize. Smaller schools also face particular problems in this regard, given their distance from appropriate resources, especially in view of the nature of the grade 8 programme. It was pointed out, also, that activity-based learning had the potential for creating problems of control and discipline and thus was viewed with some caution by teachers of grade 8 students. The Technical Advisory Committee also noted that teachers feel that the grade 8 program contains a considerable amount of subject-matter, to the extent that they were sometimes reluctant to employ methods that would slow their classes down and thus make it more difficult to complete the course. Nonetheless, the Committee believes that with careful planning, this problem can usually be solved.

The social participation section of the assessment also included three items which asked students whether, or to what extent, the grade 8 program influenced their activities outside the classroom. Thus, for example, item 26 asked students whether, as part of their social studies program, they had helped other people. Sixty point five percent (60.5%) of students said that this never happened, though 17.8% said that it happened a few times a year, and another 19.5% said that it happened even more often than this. In response to item 27, 83.9% of students said that social studies had on at least a few occasions influenced them to watch particular television programs, read newspapers or magazines, or discuss issues with friends. Fifty-one point five percent (51.5%) of students reported that they were more likely to become involved in issues affecting the planet and society as a result of the social studies program (item 28). Twenty-five percent (25.0%) reported that there would be no change, and, somewhat puzzlingly, 19.0% reported that they were less likely to be so involved.

All in all, these results are not unexpected. It is still unusual for students to be involved in social participation activities outside the classroom as part of their social studies program, so the response to item 26 was not surprising. The responses to items 27 and 28 are definitely encouraging: it appears that students are making a connection between their study of the past and what is happening in today's world and that they are, with some exceptions, being influenced by the social studies program and by their teachers to take an active interest in the world around them.

## TEACHER DATA

Grade 8 social studies teachers were also surveyed and the main results were as follows. First, a considerable proportion of them have minimal academic and professional qualifications in social studies, with approximately one-half having less than a university minor in history or geography. Second, there is a wide variety in the time actually allocated to the grade 8 social studies program in schools, with 21.9% of teachers reporting that they have less time than provincially authorized. Third, over 90% of grade 8 classes are taught in a non-semestered setting. Fourth, most teachers see social studies as contributing to the development of students' decision-making skills and personal autonomy, and secondarily transmitting the cultural heritage. Fifth, 75% of teachers report that they are satisfied with the curriculum guide, and 70% with the textbook. Sixth, less than 50% of teachers are satisfied with the nature or availability of supplementary resources. Seventh, teachers report using a reasonable range of teaching strategies, though it seems that in roughly one-half of classrooms there is little scope for student involvement or activity. Although the grade 8 program is History, primary sources are rarely used. Eighth, teachers use a variety of evaluation techniques, with the greatest emphasis on knowledge and skill objectives, and the least on social participation. Ninth, inservice work in social studies is apparently a very low priority in the province. Seventy-one percent (71%) of teachers reported that they had attended two or fewer social studies inservices in the past two years. The great majority of teachers said that they found fellow teachers to be their greatest source of help in teaching social studies.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The grade 8 recommendations deal broadly with proposals to improve curriculum implementation, curriculum support materials, and pre-service and inservice training for teachers of social studies. For easy reference, the following recommendations have been directed to their most obvious implementers according to the legend below:

Manitoba Education and Training = M
Teachers = T
School Administrators = S
Faculties of Education = F

| M | T | S | F | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | 1. Teachers of grade 8 social studies should be encouraged to devote adequate time to the later units of the program. |
| ✓ | | | ✓ | 2. Manitoba Education and Training, and the teacher education institutions, should draw teachers' attention to the role and use of the curriculum guide as a means of course planning. |
| ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | 3. Teachers' attention should be drawn to the importance of identifying the essential terms, facts, and concepts to be taught in any given unit, and of making them clear to students. |
| ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 4. Teachers should be encouraged to design and use evaluation methods that require students to draw upon knowledge and skills cumulatively throughout the year. |
| | ✓ | | | 5. Teachers should do whatever possible to review and reinforce students' knowledge of key items of subject matter, for example, through charts, wall displays, pictures, time-charts, and other such stimuli. |
| | ✓ | | | 6. Teachers should provide students with frequent opportunity to review material learned previously and to connect it to material currently being studied, with the intent that students form a coherent picture of their year's work as a whole. |

| M | T | S | F | |
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| ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 7. Manitoba Education and Training, together with the appropriate professional organizations and the teacher education institutions, should help teachers to find ways of combining the teaching of subject matter with skill development. |
| | ✓ | ✓ | | 8. Inservice planners should make every effort to ensure that skill development in social studies becomes a major theme of inservice and professional development. |
| ✓ | | | | 9. Manitoba Education and Training should continue to draw attention to the value of the Curriculum Assessment support materials for social studies (also known as CAST) in connection with the social studies program. |
| ✓ | | | ✓ | 10. The teacher-training institutions should be consulted with a view to ensuring that new social studies teachers are fully aware of the importance of skills development in social studies. |
| ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 11. Teachers should be encouraged to make more use of visual and pictorial material as a vehicle for skills development in social studies. |
| ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 12. Teachers should be encouraged to put greater emphasis upon the teaching of writing skills as part of their teaching of social studies. |
| ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 13. Manitoba Education and Training, teacher-training institutions, and inservice planners should ensure that the SOLO method of evaluating written work is drawn to the attention of teachers and student teachers as a useful method of teaching and evaluating writing in social studies. |
| ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 14. Manitoba Education and Training should consult with the Manitoba Social Science Teachers Association, the universities, school divisions, and other appropriate bodies, to direct attention to the importance of skills development in social studies. |

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| ✓ | | | | 15. Manitoba Education and Training should continue to draw attention to the importance of the attitudes and values objectives of the social studies curriculum. |
| | ✓ | | | 16. Teachers should continue to engage students in the exploration and development of attitudes and values relevant to the subject-matter of the curriculum. |
| | | | ✓ | 17. The teacher-training institutions should continue to draw the attention of student teachers to the attitudes and values objectives of the curriculum. |
| ✓ | | | | 18. Manitoba Education and Training should continue to draw to the attention of teachers the importance of the social participation goals of the social studies curriculum. |
| | | | ✓ | 19. The teacher-training institutions should make student-teachers fully aware of the implications and means of implementation of the social participation objectives of the curriculum. |
| | ✓ | ✓ | | 20. Teachers should be encouraged to make greater use of group work, speakers, and field trips on topics relevant to the curriculum. |
| | | ✓ | | 21. School administrators and trustees should be encouraged to eliminate the obstacles that now exist in the planning for and use of speakers and field trips. |
| | ✓ | | | 22. Teachers should be encouraged to place more emphasis on involving students actively in their own learning. |
| | ✓ | ✓ | | 23. School administrators and teachers must be encouraged to devote the stipulated time allotment (35 minutes per day) to the grade 8 social studies program. |
| | | ✓ | | 24. School administrators, when assigning teachers to teach social studies, should ensure that appropriate professional development and training is provided. |

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| | ✓ | | | 25. | Teachers of social studies should ensure that appropriate professional development and training is available and utilized. |
| ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | 26. | School administrators, teachers, and professional development personnel should ensure that social studies is given increased emphasis in inservice activity. |
| ✓ | | | ✓ | 27. | Manitoba Education and Training and the teacher education institutions, should make teachers more aware of, and encourage them to make greater use of the social studies resources available through Manitoba Education and Training. |
| ✓ | | | ✓ | 28. | Manitoba Education and Training and the teacher education institutions should encourage teachers to make greater use of primary sources in their teaching of the grade 8 program. |
| ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | 29. | Manitoba Education and Training, and the appropriate professional bodies, together with the universities, should continue and expand their efforts to develop prototype materials that demonstrate how student-centred activity methods can be used in the grade 8 program. |
| | ✓ | | ✓ | 30. | The appropriate organizations involved in social studies education should be encouraged to work together in establishing a clearing house and resource collection for the use of social studies teachers in Manitoba. |
| ✓ | | | ✓ | 31. | Manitoba Education and Training and teacher training institutions should encourage teachers to place more emphasis upon student activities. |

| M | T | S | F | |
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| ✓ | | | ✓ | 32. Manitoba Education and Training and teacher training institutions should encourage teachers to place more emphasis upon student activities related to the social participation objectives of the grade 8 program. |
| ✓ | | | | |
| | | | | 33. Manitoba Education and Training should take whatever steps are needed to ensure the implementation of the above recommendations. |

# GRADE 10 SOCIAL STUDIES ASSESSMENT

The grade 10 portion of the assessment consisted of a student test and a teacher survey which focused on assessing the categories of objectives outlined in the introduction.

## STUDENT DATA

KNOWLEDGE

Students' responses to the items dealing with knowledge of facts and generalizations present a mixed picture. On the one hand, most students had some command of basic factual information: for example, they knew that the U.S.A. is Canada's chief trading partner; that fishing zones are a major issue between Newfoundland and St. Pierre and Miquelon; that the Grand Banks are an important fishing area; and so on. On the other hand, there were some surprising gaps in their knowledge, especially regarding the Canadian Shield and the relative locations of the Great Lakes. In some cases they were familiar with specialized terminology, such as plate tectonics, but not in others, for example, localization or region. Overall, a picture emerges which is fairly congruent with that for the thinking and research skills subtest: it seems that about 60% of students fared reasonably well on this section of the assessment, but that a substantial minority, some 40%, did less well than might have been expected.

It was notable that the proportion of correct responses increased in the later units of the course. This was presumably due to the fact that these units had been taught more recently and thus were fresher in the students' minds, except, of course, in the case of those non-semestered students who might have completed some of these units in their first semester. However, the evidence does not allow us to ascertain what, if any, the relationship is between semestering and performance on an end-of-year test. It might well be, however, that there is a case for teachers and students spending more time on cumulative and sequential reinforcement of facts, concepts, and skills.

There is some evidence in the responses to the items in this section of the assessment that students are not as familiar as they might be with specialized geographic terms. For example, the word "isohyets" was unfamiliar to most students, and while students can give a general meaning to such terms as "region" or "localization", they do not use them in their specific geographic sense.

Perhaps the dominant message of the assessment, so far as knowledge of facts and generalizations is concerned, is that while a majority of students appear to be performing satisfactorily, a substantial minority is performing below expectations. It is difficult to determine the reasons for this given the nature of this assessment but it is to be hoped that the newly available revision to the Teacher's Guide and the revised edition of the textbook will help to rectify the problems.

In this type of assessment the interpretation of data obviously depends upon the expectations that one brings to the task since there is no definitive or objective benchmark against which to measure them. The data observed on the thinking and research skills objectives appear to be more or less consistent with those of the 1984 Social Studies Assessment, although it must be noted that in 1984 grades 9 and 12 were chosen for assessment, and not grade 10. Moreover, anyone who remembers marking departmental examinations in the 1960's will find little cause for either surprise or alarm in these results. It must always be remembered, moreover, that one should not read too much into the results of a relatively small number of multiple-choice items. The data reported here is at best suggestive, it is certainly not definitive.

The Technical Advisory Committee rated the majority of items as good to very good in terms of clarity and quality and judged them to be "about right" in terms of difficulty. The Technical Advisory Committee also reported that the results were about what it expected, although a little below expectations in places, and especially in the case of some of the map location items.

### THINKING AND RESEARCH SKILLS

Regarding the thinking and research skill objectives of the grade 10 program, perhaps the most obvious point that emerges is that while some 60% or more of grade 10 students appear to have a solid grounding in the skills of thinking and research as applied to Geography, there remains a substantial minority who do not. It might be that there is some relationship between this and the data concerning the social participation objectives which shows that somewhere around one-third of grade 10 Geography classes apparently do not get very far beyond the pages of the textbook.

Some of the incorrect responses to the items on the skills section of the assessment can be attributed to students' failure to properly read or interpret the items. This is, in part, a matter of practice and experience and it would not be surprising if students do sometimes rush to answer an item before they really understand it. This happens in most examinations at any level. Moreover, it is likely that multiple-choice items of the complexity that were used as part of the assessment were unfamiliar to a number of students, who therefore were uncertain how to respond to them. There might also have been an element of nervousness on the part of some students which made them more prone to making elementary mistakes than they might otherwise have been. Conversely, some teachers reported that in some cases students did not appear to take the assessment all that seriously since it did not "count for marks". Indeed, in some cases, schools or school divisions did not take the assessment as seriously as they should have, an attitude which no doubt was picked up by students. It must be emphasized that the fundamental purpose of the provincial assessment system is to identify strengths and weaknesses in programs of study and thereby to improve them. It is important, therefore, that everyone involved with an assessment does everything possible to help it accomplish its purpose.

At the same time, many students in grade 10 are still at a stage of cognitive development where they are not yet skilled in suspending judgment and holding one variable or element in a problem constant while they juggle others in order to find the most viable solution. They are still inclined to be attracted to one particular aspect of a problem, especially if it is prominent in the way in which a problem is displayed or presented. As a result, they form snap judgments and reach premature closure.

Some of the mistakes in this section of the assessment appear also to have been the result of arithmetical error. Certainly, students did less well than expected on items where they had to perform some arithmetical operation, such as subtracting to find a temperature range or converting geographically-presented information into percentages.

On the other hand, most students appear to have had little difficulty in tackling applied comprehension exercises. The cartoons caused little difficulty and students appear to have grasped the meaning of the poem that was presented to them.

Overall, a mixed picture emerges. Obviously there are students - and indeed a majority of them - whose skills are being developed and applied effectively. At the same time, in a significant minority of cases, this important aspect of teaching and learning appears to need more attention. The task is to make it possible for these students to benefit from the same experience and expertise as their successful counterparts.

ESSAY

The figures generated by the essay-writing section of the assessment show that some two-thirds (or slightly more) of grade 10 students place in the middle or high categories in terms of sentence structure and mechanics. While it is true that the "middle" category does not demand an especially high standard, it is nonetheless an indicator that students are able to present their information and ideas with reasonable clarity. At the same time just over a fifth of students are having fundamental problems in writing. Further, if one assumes (not unreasonably) that there is a group of students at the low end of the "middle" category whose performance is only marginally satisfactory, we arrive at the two-thirds/one-third division that has emerged elsewhere in these findings. Approximately one-third of students, it seems, are experiencing difficulties with basic writing tasks.

Whether this should be a cause for concern is perhaps a matter of educational philosophy. One could argue that standards are standards and therefore some students must fail. This was more or less the operating assumption of departmental examinations in the days that the province used them. If one adds the students who failed those examinations to those who never even wrote them, we arrive at roughly a two-thirds/one-third division. However, it must surely be a cause of some concern that one-third of students are finding the program difficult, with all the obvious consequences for attitude, morale and motivation, not only towards Geography or social studies, but towards education in general. There is, of course, also the question of whether, as a society, we can afford so many ill-prepared students. It would be useful to know more about these students and the source of their problems. Are they, for example, a product of the merging of 100 and 101 courses? Are they concentrated in particular areas or groups? Is the curriculum or the textbook and related material the source of the problem? Is the problem one of attitude or ability? And so on.

## ATTITUDES AND VALUES

The most striking finding on the attitudes and values section of the assessment was the relatively high proportion of students who reported that they were undecided on a particular issue. Even when asked whether the Maritime provinces would not be better off to join the U.S.A, 26% of students said they were undecided. Similarly, 41% of students had no opinion on whether Canada is or is not too closely aligned with the U.S.A. grade 10 students are obviously at an age when politics is not a high priority, but in the context of the social studies curriculum, it is rather surprising to find so many students unable or unwilling to express an opinion. As in grade 8, students apparently feel very strongly about environmental issues. Slightly more than half of grade 10 students take what might be described as a generous stance to issues of aid and development, though this proportion drops if some measure of personal sacrifice appears to be involved. If the world is in fact becoming a global village and increasingly interdependent, it is not clear that grade 10 students have yet developed the appropriate attitudes and beliefs.

Forty-three percent (43%) of students said they like the grade 10 program, while 18% expressed dislike and 36% were apparently indifferent. The program appears to be having some success in arousing students' interest in issues arising from it. Seventy percent (70%) of students report that it has influenced them to pay attention to the news. However, only 42% report that they are likely to become involved in action on issues. Over 80% of students say they have never written to a newspaper, a politician or anyone else on a social studies topic. Most classrooms encourage some degree of student involvement in classroom activities, although 50% of students say that they never make presentations or reports and 72% say that they never go on Geography field trips.

## TEACHER DATA

Grade 10 teachers were also surveyed and the main findings were as follows. First, about half of grade 10 Geography teachers have only a university minor or less in their subject. Second, approximately 60% of grade 10 classes operate on a semestered system. Third, as in grade 8, most teachers see social studies as contributing primarily to the development of students' decision-making skills and independence, and secondarily to the transmission of knowledge and of cultural heritage. Fourth, 75% of teachers report that they are satisfied with the curriculum guide, and 72% with supplementary resources, although over half of the teachers reported that the textbook was unsatisfactory. Fifth, few teachers, for whatever reason, are able to remain within the suggested time allocations for the various units of the grade 10 program, and few teachers actually complete the course. Sixth, the majority of grade 10 Geography classrooms contain a reasonable balance between teacher activity and student activity, although teachers play a central role and some activities, such as field trips, could be more widely used. As a general rule, teaching strategies which demand a fundamental revision of traditional classroom roles and a higher than usual amount of preparation are infrequently used. Seventh, teachers use a variety of evaluation techniques with primary emphasis on the knowledge and skill objectives of the curriculum. Eighth, inservice in Geography is not a high priority; only 40% of teachers reported that they had attended three or more inservices in the last two years. Overwhelmingly, teachers reported that colleagues were their most important source of ideas and advice in teaching social studies.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The grade 10 recommendations deal broadly with changes to improve curriculum implementation, curriculum support materials, and pre-service and inservice training for teachers of social studies. For easy reference, the recommendations have been directed to their most obvious implementers according to the legend below:

Manitoba Education and Training = M
Teachers = T
School Administrators = S
Faculties of Education = F

| M | T | S | F | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | 1. Manitoba Education and Training, the teacher education institutions, and the appropriate professional organizations must do everything possible to encourage teachers to use the revised edition of the textbook and the teacher's guide. |
| | ✓ | ✓ | | 2. Teachers must be encouraged to use the curriculum guide in order to identify the key instructional objectives of the grade 10 program in the areas of knowledge, concepts, and generalizations. |
| | ✓ | | | 3. Teachers must provide frequent opportunities for students to review work previously taken so that it remains fresh in their minds. |
| | ✓ | | | 4. Teachers must plan their units of work so that each builds cumulatively upon the content and skills taught in those that precede it. |
| ✓ | | | ✓ | 5. Manitoba Education and Training and/or the universities should undertake research to ascertain why a significant minority of students appears to be having difficulty with the grade 10 Geography program and what can be done to help them. |
| ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 6. Manitoba Education and Training and/or other appropriate bodies should prepare teaching materials to help teachers in their teaching of the grade 10 Geography program. |

| M | T | S | F | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | 7. Manitoba Education and Training, the teacher training institutions, and the appropriate professional organizations must draw to teachers' attention the importance of the thinking and research skill objectives of the program. |
| ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | 8. Teacher training institutions and inservice planners should ensure that teacher education programs contain an appropriate emphasis on skill development and the evaluation of students' performance. |
| ✓ | | | | 9. Manitoba Education and Training should increase its efforts to produce and publicize appropriate support materials for teaching and evaluating skills. |
| | ✓ | | | 10. Teachers must continue to give emphasis to the learning of important map locations, within the general context of emphasizing geographic concepts, skills and processes. |
| ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 11. Teachers must be encouraged to give appropriate emphasis to skills development and assessment in their own testing and evaluation of students. |
| ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 12. Superintendents, Trustees, Manitoba Social Science Teachers' Association, the teacher-training institutions, and in-service organizers must be made aware of the importance of skills development together with practical methods of teaching and evaluating skills. |
| ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 13. Teachers must be encouraged and helped to incorporate writing skills into their teaching of Geography. |
| | ✓ | | | 14. Teachers should ensure that school tests and evaluations in social studies incorporate items that call for the use of writing sustained prose. |
| | ✓ | | | 15. Teachers of social studies should find ways of working together with colleagues in other disciplines to improve students' writing. |

| M | T | S | F |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | ✓ |  |  | 16. Teachers of social studies should involve students in writing that calls for the organization and presentation of facts and opinions. |
| ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 17. Teachers should be introduced to the SOLO taxonomy for evaluation and should be encouraged to incorporate it into their teaching. |
|  |  |  | ✓ | 18. The teacher-education institutions should ensure that teacher-education programs in the social studies give adequate attention to the importance of incorporating the teaching of writing skills into social studies. |
| ✓ |  |  |  | 19. Manitoba Education and Training should examine the social studies curriculum in order to ensure that it provides sufficient emphasis upon the learning and practice of writing skills. |
|  | ✓ |  |  | 20. Teachers should give more attention to using the grade 10 social studies program to address issues and problems affecting Canada and the world, so that students develop informed opinions on them. |
|  | ✓ |  |  | 21. Teachers should give more attention to enhancing the global implications of what is taught in the grade 10 program, so that, for example, it continues to develop the theme of spaceship earth begun in earlier grades. |
| ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 22. Teachers should be made aware of the social participation goals of the social studies curriculum. |
|  | ✓ | ✓ |  | 23. Teachers should be encouraged to make greater use of field trips and speakers on topics relevant to the curriculum. |
|  |  | ✓ |  | 24. School administrators and trustees should be encouraged to make it easier for teachers to incorporate field trips into their social studies teaching. |

| M | T | S | F | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | ✓ | | | 25. Teachers should place greater emphasis on the value of involving students more actively in their own learning, especially through group work and research projects. |
| ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 26. Teachers should be encouraged, and provided with the necessary resources, to make more use of sources beyond the authorized textbook. |
| ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 27. Teachers should be encouraged to prepare students for involvement in issues that are relevant to the topics studied as part of the curriculum. |
| | ✓ | ✓ | | 28. Teachers and administrators should be made aware of the value of students writing to politicians and public figures and performing other politically relevant acts that are compatible with the objectives of the grade 10 Geography program and that serve worthwhile educational goals. |
| ✓ | | | | 29. Manitoba Education and Training should explore ways in which those teachers who are teaching effectively in the spirit of the curriculum can make their experience and expertise available to their colleagues. |
| | | ✓ | | 30. School administrators should make every effort to appoint teachers of social studies who have adequate and appropriate academic and professional social studies education and training. |
| | | ✓ | | 31. School divisions should ensure that teachers who are assigned to teach social studies without appropriate academic and professional backgrounds are provided with inservice education. These teachers should be encouraged and supported in engaging in such inservice work. |
| ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 32. Manitoba Education and Training, the universities, and the appropriate professional organizations should cooperate to provide support for social studies teachers who lack appropriate academic and professional background in their subject. |

| M | T | S | F | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | ✓ | ✓ | | 33. School administrators and the appropriate professional organizations should make provision for the greater involvement of teachers in the planning and development of social studies inservices. |
| ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | 34. Manitoba Education and Training, the appropriate professional organizations, and the universities should develop programs and activities to assist those teachers who do not currently make use of their services. |
| | ✓ | ✓ | | 35. Administration and teachers responsible for inservice activities should ensure that sufficient attention is paid to social studies. |
| | ✓ | ✓ | | 36. Teachers should be encouraged and helped to increase the extent to which they use teaching methods which involve students more actively in their learning. |
| ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 37. Teachers should be encouraged and helped to include social participation goals and activities in their evaluation of students' performance. |
| ✓ | | | | 38. Manitoba Education and Training should commission a research project into the amount of time actually allocated to social studies in schools, with a view to ascertaining to what extent the recommended allocation of 110-120 hours of instruction per year is actually achieved. |
| ✓ | | | | 39. Manitoba Education and Training should foster joint projects with other bodies: for example, museums, the Provincial Archives, Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, the Manitoba Social Science Teachers Association, and other appropriate groups, for the purpose of increasing the available support to social studies teachers. |
| ✓ | | | | 40. Manitoba Education and Training should make every effort to support the work of social studies teachers in all areas of the province, but especially those outside of Winnipeg. |

# COMPARISON OF 1984 AND 1989 RESULTS

The 1989 Social Studies Assessment included a comparison testing component directed at determining whether or not there was any change in the achievement of curricular objectives or in the level of curriculum implementation from 1984 to 1989. This comparison was carried out by a readministration of the knowledge and thinking and research skills sections of the written tests that were used for the 1984 Social Studies assessment in grades 3, 6, 9, and 12.

As will be seen in the results reported below, no significant differences were found between performance in 1984 and that in 1989. There were slight variations, but they can be explained by chance and circumstance. In the statistical sense, the differences were not significant. The overall results are presented in Table 11.1 and Table 11.2 below.

### Table 11.1

Knowledge Subtest
Comparison of Means 1984 and 1989

| Grade Level | 1984 Means | 1989 Means | Statistical Significance |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 15.547 | 16.140 | none |
| 6 | 18.847 | 19.029 | none |
| 9 | 26.784 | 27.327 | none |
| 12 | 22.282 | 20.077 | none |

### Table 11.2

Thinking and Research Skills Subtest
Comparison of Means 1984 and 1989

| Grade Level | 1984 Means | 1989 Means | Statistical Significance |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 21.234 | 21.076 | none |
| 6 | 22.495 | 22.095 | none |
| 9 | 17.172 | 16.457 | none |
| 12 | 20.371 | 18.999 | none |

In all four grade levels, the same pattern appears - marginal differences in the means but nothing of statistical significance. Despite five years of experience with the social studies curriculum, and despite the recommendations of the 1984 Assessment Report, nothing has changed.

It is difficult to know what to make of this. It is a cause for some surprise that the 1989 results were not better than they were. The curriculum and the textbooks had been in place for some five years; in the case of grade 9, a provincially-designated teachers' guide was available; the assessment itself was no longer a novelty; inservice activities had taken place, especially around the implementation of the new curriculum; and the teacher education institutions had based their teacher-preparation activities specifically on the new provincial curriculum. Despite all this, however, student performance did not change to any significant degree. It is difficult to explain this, short of concluding that there is some systemic or structural problem in the organization and delivery of the curriculum, or in the teacher education and professional development system, or in the conduct of teaching, that needs to be addressed. It is not clear to what extent the various recommendations contained in the 1984 Final Report were in fact helpful, or effectively implemented in all instances, and it might be that herein lies part of the problem.

## RECOMMENDATION

As indicated in the tables above, there were, with one exception, no statistically significant changes in grade 3, 6, 9, and 12 student performances in either the knowledge or the thinking and research skills subtests from 1984 to 1989. This suggests that:

Manitoba Education and Training should review the recommendations made in Chapter I of the Manitoba Social Studies Assessment 1984, Final Report and carry out such curriculum revision and implementation actions as are appropriate.